

AESCHYLUS

ΠΕΡΣΑΙ

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΣΩΝ

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ, μήτηρ Ξέρξου

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων

Ἑλλάδ' ἐξ αἶαν πιστὰ καλεῖται,

καὶ τῶν ἀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρύσων

ἐδράνων φύλακες,

5 κατὰ πρεσβείαν οὐς αὐτὸς ἀναξ

PERSIANS

PERSIANS

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

CHORUS of Persian elders of the King's council

QUEEN, widow of Darius and mother of Xerxes

MESSENGER

GHOST OF DARIUS, the late King of Persia

XERXES, the present King of Persia

Produced: 472 BC, as second play in the tetralogy Phineus, Persians,

Glaucus of Potniae, Prometheus the Fire-Bearer.

Scene: Susa. Twelve chairs are set out for a meeting of the royal council. A mound (ignored until attention is drawn to it) represents the tomb of Darius. One side-passage is imagined as leading to the city and palace, the other towards the west and Greece.

Enter CHORUS from the direction of the city.

chorus

Of the Persians, who have departed
for the land of Greece, we are called the Trusted,¹
the guardians of the wealthy palace rich in gold,
whom our lord himself, King Xerxes
son of Darius, chose by seniority

¹ A Greek term for the close counsellors of the Persian king, cf. Xenophon, Anabasis 1.5.15. The opening of the play closely echoes that of Phrynichus' earlier play on the same theme (Phrynichus fr. 8), but for βεβηκότων "who have gone" Aeschylus substitutes οἰχομένων, which carries a strong (though by the speakers unintended) suggestion that those who have departed are destined not to return.

AESCHYLUS

- Ξέρξης βασιλεὺς Δαρείου γένῃς
 εὔλετο χώρας ἐφορεύειν
 ἀμφὶ δὲ νόστῳ τῷ βασιλείῳ
 καὶ πολυάνδρου στρατιᾶς ἤδη
 10 κακόμεναις ἄγαν ὀρσολοπεῖται
 θυμὸς ἔσθθεν
 πᾶσα γὰρ ἰσχυρὴ Ἀσιατογενὴς
 οἴχεσκε, νέον δ' ἄνδρα βαυίζει
 <|>,
 κοῦτε τις ἄγγελος οὔτε τις ἱπτεὺς
 15 ἄστυ τὸ Περσῶν ἀφικνεῖται
 οἶτε τὸ Σούσαν ἢ δ' Ἀγβατάνων
 καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν Κίσιον ἔρκος
 προλιπόντες ἔβαν, οἱ μὲν ἐφ' ἑταῶν,
 οἱ δ' ἐπὶ ναῶν, πεζοὶ τε βάδην
 20 πολέμου σῆφος παρέχοντες
 οἶος Ἀμίστρης ἢ δ' Ἀρταφρένης

6 after Δαρείου γένῃς M I b k' insert Δαρείου υἱός (υἱός Δαρείου k).

9 πολυάνδρου Wecklein: πολυχρόσου (-ους M) codd.

13 -14 lacuna posited by Mekler: perh. e.g. <λαρθεῖσα γυνὴ πάντα καὶ οἶκον>.

16 Ἀγβατάνων Brunck (so M at 535, 961): Ἐγβατάνων codd.

17 Κίσιον k: κισσίων M I b k.

PERSIANS

to supervise the country.
 But by now the spirit within me,
 all too ready to foresee evil, is troubled
 about the return of the King
 and of his vast army of men;
 for all the strength of the Asiatic race
 has departed, and <in every house
 the woman left behind> howls for her young husband,²
 and no messenger, no horseman,
 has come to the Persian capital.
 They left the walls of Susa and Agbatana³
 and the ancient ramparts of Cissia⁴
 and went, some on horseback,
 some on board ship, and the marching infantry
 providing the fighting masses.
 Such were Amistres and Artaphrenes

2 For this tentative restoration cf. 63-64, 123-5, 135-9, 541-5, and see generally A. F. Garvie, *Lexis* 17 (1999) 26-28. If we do not posit a lacuna, we are forced to assume that the υἱός ὄντις is Xerxes (cf. 782) and that it is "the strength of the Asiatic race" (i.e. the army) which is "howling" about him; but it makes no sense that the chorus should make confident assertions about the state of opinion in the army when the whole context is concerned with the apprehensions that are assailing them owing to their total lack of information about what the army is doing and how it is faring.

3 The capital of Media, about 300 km north of Susa; usually called Ecbatana by Herodotus and later Greek authors (modern Hamadan).

4 Aeschylus seems to take this as the name of a city (cf. 120); it was in fact the name of the region (today Khuzestan, or al-Ahwaz, in south-western Iran) of which Susa was the chief city.

AESCHYLUS

- καὶ Μεγαβάτης ἡδ' Ἀστιάσπης,
 ταροὶ Περοπῶν,
 βασιλῆς βασιλέως ὑποχοὶ μέγιστο,
 25 σπένονται, στρατιᾶς πολλῆς ἔφοροι,
 τοξοδάμαντές τ' ἡδ' ἵπποβάται,
 φοβεροὶ μὲν ἰδεῖν, δεινοὶ δὲ μάχην
 ψυχῆς εὐτόλμημον δόξῃ
 Ἀρτεμβάρης θ' ὑπιογάρμης
 30 καὶ Μασίστρης, ὃ τε τοξοδάμας
 ἐσθλὸς Ἰμαῖος, Φαρανδάκης θ'
 ἵππων τ' ἐλατήρ Σοσθάνης,
 ἄλλους δ' ὁ μέγας καὶ πολυθρέμμων
 Νεῦλος ἐπεμψεν Σουσιस्कάνης,
 35 Πηγασταγῶν Αἰγυπτογενῆς,
 ὃ τε τῆς ἱερᾶς Μέμφιδος ἄρχων
 μέγας Ἀρσάμης, τὰς τ' ὠχυρίους
 Θήβας ἐρέπων Ἀριόμαρδος,
 καὶ ἐλειοβάται ναδὼν ἐρέται
 40 δεινοὶ πληθὸς τ' ἀνάρητοι
 ἀβροδιαίτων δ' ἔχεται Λυδῶν
 ὄχλος, οἳ τ' ἐκίπιν ἡπειρογενεῖς
 κατέχουσιν ἔθνος, τοὺς Μιτραγάθης

22 Μεγαβάτης κ. Μεγαβαΐης κ. Μεταβάτης M Ib.

28 εὐτόλμημον κ. Τολμιαῖ ἐν τλήμονι M Ib κ.

43 Μιτρα- κ. Μιτρο- κ. Μητρα- or Μητρο- M Ib κ.

PERSIANS

and Megabates and Astaspes,⁵
 marshals of the Persians,
 kings subordinate to the Great King,
 who have sped away—overseers of a great army,
 slayers with the bow or riders of the horse,
 terrifying to behold and fearsome in battle
 in the steadfast self-confidence of their hearts;
 and Artembares the charioteer
 and Masistres, and brave Himaeus
 the archer, and Pharandaces,
 and Sosthanes, driver of horses.
 The great, nurturing stream
 of Nile sent others: Susiscanes,
 the Egyptian-born Pegastagon;
 great Arsames, the ruler
 of holy Memphis, and Arionardus
 who governs ancient Thebes;
 and dwellers in the marshes,⁶ rowing ships,
 formidable and in numbers past counting.
 Following them are a mass of Lydians
 of luxurious lifestyle, who control every race
 born on the mainland;⁷ Mitragathes

5 Here begins the first of three long catalogues of leaders of the army (the others are at 302–328 and 957–999). A substantial proportion of them are, certainly or probably, genuine Persian names; most of the others would give a Greek ear the impression of being Persian or at least exotic. Aeschylus does not seem to have been interested in prosopographical accuracy, at least not to any significant extent; of the twelve principal commanders named by Herodotus (7.82, 38, 97) not one is mentioned in the play.

6 Of the Nile delta.

7 "The mainland" (ἡπειρος) here means (western) Asia Minor, which had once been controlled by the kingdom of Lydia and was now governed from that kingdom's former capital, Sardes, by a Persian satrap.

AESCHYLUS

- Ἀρκεῖς τ' ἀγαθός, βασιλῆς διόποι,
 45 χαί πολύχρυσοι Σάρδεις ἐπόχους
 πολλοῖς ἄρμασιν ἐξορμῶσιν,
 δίφρυμά τε καὶ τρίφρυμα τέλη,
 φοβερὰν ὄψιν προσιδέσθαι
 στεῦνται δ' ἱεροῦ Τιμῶλου πελάται
 50 ζυγὸν ἀμφιβαλεῖν δοῦλον Ἑλλάδι,
 Μάρδον, Θάρυβιν, λόγχης ἀκμονας,
 καὶ ἀκοντισταὶ Μυσοί· Βαβυλῶν δ'
 ἡ πολύχρυσος πᾶμμικτον ὄχλον
 πέμπει σύρῃν, ναῶν τ' ἐπόχους
 55 καὶ τοξουλῶν λήματα πιστοῦς
 τὸ μαχαιροφόρον τ' ἔθνος ἐκ πάσης
 Ἀσίας ἔπεται
 δευαῖς βασιλέως ὑπὸ πομπαῖς,
 τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσίδος αἶας
 60 οὔχεται ἀνδρῶν,
 οὗς περὶ πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσιήτις
 θρέψασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερῷ,
 τοκέες τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμεροληθὸν
 τεῖνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται
 σφ. α πεπέρασεν μὲν ὁ περσέπτολις ἦδη

45 χαί Blomfield: καὶ codd.

PERSIANS

and brave Arcteus, kingly commanders,
 and Sardis, rich in gold, urge them forth,
 riding in many chariots,
 squadrons with two poles and with three,⁸
 a fearsome sight to behold;
 and those who dwell near holy Timolus⁹ are eager
 to impose the yoke of slavery on Greece,
 Mardon and Tharybis, anvils of the spear,¹⁰
 and the javelin-men of Mysia.¹¹ And Babylon,
 rich in gold, sends forth a mixed multitude
 in a long trailing column, men on board ships
 and men trusted for their bravery as archers;
 and the sabre-carrying host
 from all Asia follows
 at the awesome summons of the King.
 Such is the flower of the men of Persia's land
 that has departed,
 for whom the whole land of Asia,
 which reared them, sighs with a longing that burns,
 and parents and wives count the days
 and tremble as the time stretches out.
 The city-sacking¹² army of the King

⁸ We are probably meant to assume that, as regularly in Homer (and as in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6. 1. 51), two horses are yoked to each pole, so that these are four- and six-horse chariots. Greeks (who in any case had long abandoned the use of chariots in war) never yoked more than two horses to a chariot, any extra horses being controlled by traces (cf. *Agamemnon* 1640–1).

⁹ A mountain near Sardis.

¹⁰ i.e. men who no more flinch before the spear than an anvil flinches before the hammer.

¹¹ An inland region of north-western Asia Minor, lying north of Sardis, around the later famous city of Pergamum.

¹² This word (*περσέπτολις*) is the first of many puns linking the name of Persia with *πέρθην*, *πέρσειν* "to sack, devastate".

- 66 βασιλειὸς στρατὸς εἰς ἀντίκτορον γείτονα χώραν,
 λινοδέσμιαι σκεδῆα κορθμῶν ἀμείψας
 70 Ἀθαμαντιῶδες Ἑλλάς,
 πολύχομφον ὁδίσμα ζυγὸν ἀμφιβάλων αὐχένι
 πόντου.
 ἀν. α. πολυάνθρωπον δ' Ἀσίας θεύριος ἄρχων
 75 ἐπὶ πᾶσαν χθόνα ποιμανόριον θεῖον ἐλαίνει
 διχόθεν, πεζονόμους ἔκ τε θαλάσσης
 ὄχυροῖσι πεποιθώς
 80 στυφελοῖς ἐφέται, χρυσογόνου γενεᾶς ἰσότητος φῶς.
 σπ. β. κυάνεον δ' ὄμμασι λύσσαν
 φονίου βέργημα δρόκοντος,
 πολύχειρ καὶ πολυναύτας,
 Σύριόν θ' ἄρμα διώκων,
 85 ἐπάγει δουρυχλοῖς ἀνδράσι
 ταξόδαμνον Ἄρη.
 ἀν. β. δοκίμος δ' οὕτως ὑποστάς

80 χρυσογόνου γρΣΜ b: χρυσονόμου M I b k.

82 φονίου b k: φονίου M I b k.

has now passed over to the neighbour land on the other
 side of the water,
 crossing the strait of Helles, daughter of Athamas,¹³
 by means of a boat-bridge tied together with flaxen
 cables,
 placing a roadway, fastened with many bolts, as a yoke
 on the neck of the sea.

The bold ruler of populous Asia
 drives his divine flock over the whole world
 on both elements, trusting in commanders stout and
 rugged,
 those who govern the land force and those at sea—
 a man equal to the gods, from the race begotten of
 gold.¹⁴

With the dark glance
 of a deadly serpent in his eyes,
 with many hands and many ships,
 driving a swift Syrian chariot,¹⁵
 he leads a war-host that slays with the bow¹⁶
 against men renowned for spear-fighting.

No one can be counted on to withstand

13 i.e. the Hellespont.

14 Alluding to the conception of Perseus when Zeus visited his mother Danaë in the form of a shower of gold; the Persians were believed to be descended from Perseus, son of Perseus and Andromeda (Herodotus 7.61.3, 7.150.2.).

15 The extremely pessimistic response said to have been given initially to the Athenians when they consulted the Delphic oracle before Xerxes' invasion (Herodotus 7.140.2-3) spoke of the city being destroyed by αὐρ τε καὶ ὄζος Ἄρης Σπογγενὲς ἄρμα διώκων.

16 lit. "bow-slaying Ares".

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

μεγάλῳ ῥεύματι φωτῶν
 ὄχυροῖς ἔρκεσιν εἴργειν
 90 ἄμαχον κύμα θαλάσσης.
 ἀπρόσκατος γὰρ ὁ Περσῶν
 92 στρατὸς ἀλκιφρον τε λαός.
 θεόθεν γὰρ κατὰ Μοῖρ' ἐκράτησεν
 στρ γ τὸ παλαιόν, ἐπέσκηψε δὲ Πέρσαις
 105 πολέμους πυργοδαίκτους
 διέπειν ὑπιογάρμας
 τε κλώνους πόλεων τ' ἀναστάσεις.
 ἐστ γ ἔμαθον δ' εὐρυπόροιο θαλάσσης
 110 πολισανομένας ἱπνεύματι λάβρῳ
 ἐσορᾶν ἢ πόντιον ἄλσος,
 πίσυνοι λεπτοδόμοις πείσ-
 113 μαισι λαοπόροις τε μηχαναῖς.
 93 ἐσφῶ δολόμεναι δ' ἀπάταν θεοῦ
 τίς ἀνὴρ θνατὸς ἀλύξει
 95 τίς ὁ κραυγῇ ποδὶ πηδῆ-
 ματος εὐπετέος ἀνάσσει;
 φιλόφρων γὰρ ποτισαίνουσα τὸ πρῶτον καράγει

this great flood of men
 and be a sturdy barrier to ward off
 the irresistible waves of the sea;
 none dare come near the army
 of the Persians and their valiant host.
 For Destiny long ago prevailed
 by divine decree, and imposed on the Persians
 the fate of conducting wars
 that destroy towered walls, clashes
 of chariots in battle, and the uprooting of cities;
 and they have learned to cross¹⁷ the level expanse
 of the sea, when its broad waters
 are whitened by rough winds,
 trusting in cables made of thin strands
 and in devices for transporting an army.
 But what mortal man can escape
 the guileful deception of a god?
 Who is so light of foot
 that he has power to leap easily away?
 For Ruin begins by fawning on a man in a friendly way¹⁸

93 -101 transposed by K.O. Müller to follow 113.

110 -1 ἀνέμῳ λάβρῳ | ἐσορᾶν codd.: ἀνέμῳ λάβρῳ | στ πρᾶν Enger.

97 ποτισαίνουσα Hermann, cf. SM πρὸ <σ>πᾶναι: σπᾶν- νοῦσα codd.

17 I translate the conjecture by Enger mentioned in the textual note; the transmitted reading, ἐσορᾶν "to look on", gives poor sense (one can look on the sea without ever leaving the shore) and involves a metrical anomaly (hiatus) not otherwise found in the metrically homogeneous section (entirely in ionics) 65-113.

18 As Cerberus does to those arriving at the gates of Hades (Hesiod, Theogony 769-771).

AESCHYLUS

- βροτὸν εἰς ἀρκύστατ' Ἄτα,
 100 τόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπὲκ θνατὸν αἰὺζαντα φυγεῖν.
 114 απ δ ταῦτά μοι μελαγχρίτων
 115 φρήν ἀμύσσεται φόβῳ,
 "ὃᾶ Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος",
 τοῦδε μὴ πόλις πύθη-
 ται, "κένανδρον μέγ' ἄστυ Σουσιῶος"
 121 καὶ τὸ Κισσιῶν πόλισμα
 ἀντιδουπον ᾄσεται,
 "ὃᾶ", τοῦτ' ἔπος γυναικοπλη-
 θῆς ὁμῶς ἀπύων,
 125 βυσσίνους δ' ἐν πέπλοις πέσῃ λακίς.
 130 πᾶς γὰρ ἱππηλάτας
 καὶ πεδοστιφῆς λεῶς
 σμήνος ὥς ἐκκλωσεν μελισσὴν σὺν ὀργῇ
 στρατοῦ,
 130 τὸν ἀμφίζευκτον ἐξαμείψας ἀμφοτέρως ὄλιον
 πρᾶντα κοινὸν αἴας,
 135 λέκτρα δ' ἀνδρῶν πόθῳ

99 ἀρκύστατ' Ἄτα West, cf. ΣΜ which cites Iliad 9.505: ἀρκύστατα codd.

100 ὑπὲκ (ὑπὲρ) γαί, cf. ΣΦ ὑπερδραμόντα: ὑπὲρ codd.

121 ᾄσεται Burney, cf. ΣΜ ἀντηγήσεται ᾄσεται (ᾄσεται b' k') codd.

PERSIANS

and leads him astray into her net,
 from which it is impossible for a mortal to escape and
 flee.

For that reason my mind
 is clothed in black and torn with fear:
 "Woe for the Persian army!"—
 I dread that our city may hear this cry—
 "The great capital of Susiana is emptied of its
 manhood!"—

and that the city of the Cissians
 will sing in antiphon,
 a vast throng of women
 howling out that word "woe!",
 and their linen gowns will be rent and torn.¹⁹

For all the horse-driving host
 and the infantry too,
 like a swarm of bees, have left the hive with the leader of
 their army,
 passing over the projecting spur²⁰ that belongs to both
 Continents
 and yokes them together across the sea.

And beds are filled with tears

19 lit. "rending will fall on their linen gowns".

20 i.e. the bridge of boats, conceived as an artificial promontory which
 seems at one end like an extension of Asia, and at the other end like an extension
 of Europe.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

- πύμπλαται δακρυῦμασιν
 135 Περσίδες δ' ἄβροπενθεῖς ἑκάστα πόθῳ φιλόνορι
 τὸν αἰγμάεντα θοῦρον εὐνατῆρ' ἀποπεψαμένα
 λείπεται μονόζυξ.
 140 ἀλλ' ἄγε, Πέρσαι, τόδ' ἐνεζόμενοι
 στέγος ἀρχαῖον
 φροντίδα κεδνὴν καὶ βαθύβουλον
 θώμεθα· χρεια δὲ προσήκει.
 πῶς ἄρα πράσσει Ξέρξης βασιλεύς
 145 Δαρειογενής;
 147 πότερον τόξου ῥῦμα τό νικῶν,
 ἢ δορυκράντου
 λόγχης ἰσχυρὸς κεκράτηκεν.

135 ἄβροπενθεῖς b, cf. ΣΜ ἄβρόντισθα: ἀβροπενθεῖς M l b k.

{146} τὸ πατρωνύμιον (πατρώνυμον b' k') γένος ἡμέτερον (ἡμέτρον or ἡμέτρον b' k') codd.: τὸ πατρ. del. Schütz, γένος ἡμέτερον del. Butler.

because the men are missed and longed for.
 Persian women, grieving amid their luxury, every one,
 loving and longing for her husband,
 having sent on his way the bold warrior who was her
 bedfellow,
 is left behind, a partner unpartnered.²¹

But come, Persians, let us sit down
 in this ancient building²²
 and take good thought and deep counsel—
 for there is pressing need to do so.

[They take their seats.]
 So how is King Xerxes,
 son of Darius, faring?²³
 Is the bent bow victorious,
 or has the power
 of the spearhead's point conquered?

[A carriage is seen approaching. Seated in it is the QUEEN-MOTHER,
 magnificently attired and attended. The CHORUS rise.]

²¹ lit. "yoked alone".

²² The building was probably left to the audience's imagination, assisted by the presence of chairs (which may have been covered with fleeces or the like for softer sitting, as in Phrynichus' play); see Sommerstein AT 35, 71.

²³ The manuscripts here add four words, translatable as "our race named after [our? his?] father", which in context are meaningless. West, *Studies* 78–79, makes an ingenious attempt to save them (proposing to read Ξέρξης βασιλεύς Δαρείου τε γένου τὸ πατρωνύμιον γένος ἡμέτερον "King Xerxes . . . and our race named after the son of Darius [Persians, cf. on 80f]"); but the chorus's anxieties at present are not for the Persian nation as a whole but for the army (8–15, 60–64, 116–7, 126–139, 158). The line probably arose from a pair of glosses pointing out (i) that Δαρειογενής was a patronymic adjective and (ii) that the (already corrupted) text was unmetrical (ἡμέτρον, cf. schol. *Seven* 885, schol. *Ar. Clouds* 92, schol. *Iliad* 2.520, 658).

150 ἀλλ' ἤδε θεῶν ἴσον ὀφθαλμοῖς
φῶς ὀρμαίνεται μήτηρ βασιλέως,
βασίλεια δ' ἐμὴ προσπίπτω
καὶ προσφθόγγους δὲ χρεῶν αὐτὴν
πάντας μῦθοισι προσσυσδᾶν.

155 ὦ βαθυζώνων ἄνασσα Περσίδων ὑπερτάτη,
μήτηρ ἢ Ξέρξου γεραιά, χαῖρε, Δαρείου γυναι-
θεοῦ μὲν εὐνάτειρα Περσῶν, θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ
ἔφυς,
εἴ τι μὴ δαίμων καλαῖος νῦν μεθέστηκε στρατῷ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ταῦτα δὴ λιποῦσ' ἱκάνω χρυσεοστόλμους δόμους
160 καὶ τὸ Δαρείου τε κάμον κοινὸν εὐνατήριον,
καί με καρδίαν ἀμύσσει φροντίς· εἰς δ' ὑμᾶς ἐρῶ
μῦθον οὐδαμῶς ἑμαυτῆς <
> οὐκ ἀδείμαντος, φίλοι,
μὴ μέγας πλοῦτος κόνισσας οὐδας ἀντρέψη ποδῖ

162 lacuna posited by Sommerstein

162 162 οὐκ ΣΦ· οὐδ' Δ1 b k οὐδ' (οὐδα) k

But look, here comes the mother of the King,
my Queen, a light as brilliant as that which shines
in the eyes of the gods! I fall down before her—

[The chorus prostrate themselves.]
and it is right that we all address her
with words of greeting.

[The CHORUS rise to their feet, and their leader addresses the QUEEN
as she descends from her carriage.]

All hail, my Queen, most exalted among the slim-waisted women of
Persia, venerable mother of Xerxes and wife of Darius! You were the
spouse of one who was a god to the Persians, and you are the mother
of their god too, unless our old protecting power has now changed
sides against our army.

queen

It is for that reason that I have come here, leaving my gold-bedecked
palace and the bedchamber I once shared with Darius, and that my
heart is torn by anxiety. I will tell you a saying which is not my own
creation <but has come down from our ancestors, and which causes
me to be> very fearful, my friends,²⁴ that great wealth may make the
dust rise from the ground by tripping up²⁵ the prosperity that

24 The supplement offered is not intended to do more than make reasonably coherent sense, on the assumption that only one line has been lost; in that case the “saying” may be the familiar piece of (Greek) folk wisdom expressed in 163–4 about the danger of excessive wealth. However, it is possible that the lacuna is longer than this.

25 lit. “overturning with its foot”, a metaphor from wrestling; the dust rises because the tripped man has fallen heavily, probably on his back (cf. Suppliants 91, *Iliad* 23.727, Archilochus fr. 130.3–4 West). See D. Sansone, *Hermes* 107 (1979) 115–6, and for the idea that great (excessive) wealth is the enemy of true prosperity, cf. 824–6, Ag. 374–384, 471, 750–6.

AESCHYLUS

- ὄλβον, ὃν Δαρεῖος ἤρεν σὺκ' ἄνευ θεῶν τινας,
 165 ταῦτά μοι μέριμν' ἀφραστός ἐστιν ἐν φρεσὶν ὀκλή,
 167 μὴτ' ἀγρημάτοισι λάμπειν φῶς, ὅσον σθένος πάρα,
 166 μῆτε χρημάτων ἀνάνδρων πλῆθος ἐν τιμῇ σέβειν,
 168 ἔστι γὰρ πλουτὸς γ' ἀμεμφής, ἀμφὶ δ' ὀφθαλμῷ
 φόβος
 ὄμμα γὰρ δόμων νομίζω δεσπότου παρουσίαν.
 170 πρὸς τὰδ', ὥς σὺτως ἐχόντων πῶνδε, σύμβουλοι
 λόγου
 τοῦδε μοι γένεσθε, Πέρσαι, γηραλέα πιστώματα
 πάντα γὰρ τὰ κέδν' ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστὶ μοι βουλευόμενα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- εὖ τὸδ' ἴσθι, γῆς ἄνασσα τῆσδε, μὴ σε δις φράσαι
 μῆτ' ἔπος μῆτ' ἔργον, ὃν ἐν δύναμιν ἡγεῖσθαι
 θέλη
 175 εὐμενεῖς γὰρ ὄντας ἡμᾶς τῶνδε συμβούλους καλεῖς.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

πολλοῖς μὲν αἰεὶ νυκτέροις ὀνείρασι
 ζύνειμι', ἀφ' οὗπερ παῖς ἐμὸς στεύλας στρατῶν
 Ταόνων γῆν οἶχεαι πέρσαι θέλων
 ἀλλ' οὐτί πω τοιόνδ' ἐναργὲς εἰδόμην

165 ὀκλή moved to end of line by Pearson: in codd. it follows ταῦτά μοι.

166-167 transposed by Ludwig.

168 ὀφθαλμῷ LXX: ὀφθαλμοῖς (-μός k) codd.

PERSIANS

Darius, not without the aid of some god, had built up. For that reason there is in my mind an indescribable anxiety, a twofold one. For those who are without wealth, the light of success does not shine in proportion to their physical power, but neither do men revere and honour an accumulation of wealth without men to defend it.²⁶ Our wealth is ample,²⁷ but I fear for our very eye; for I consider the master, when present, to be the eye of his house. In view of this, considering the situation to be as I have said, be my counsellors about this matter, you venerable, trusty Persians, for all the good advice I receive comes from you.

chorus

Be well assured, Queen of this land, that you do not have to tell us twice to do any service in word or deed, so far as our ability permits.²⁸ we on whom you call for advice are your loyal friends.

queen

Dreams of the night have been my frequent companions ever since my son led out his army and departed in order to lay waste the land of the Ionians,²⁹ but never yet have I had one that was so plain as during the night just past. I

26 In other words, human and material resources are alike essential to the acquisition and maintenance of political power (cf. Sophocles, Oedipus the King 540-2), and a regime that is strong in only one of these respects may well be in danger.

27 lit. "irreproachable".

28 lit. "of those in which ability is willing to lead (us)".

29 The Persians and many other peoples of western Asia applied the name "Ionian" (Old Persian Yavana, Hebrew Yawan, etc.) to all Greeks, doubtless because the first Greeks with whom they came into contact, those of Asia Minor, mostly belonged to the Ionian branch of the Greek people.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

8 ὥς τῆς παροίθεν ευφρόνης λέξαι δέ σοι
 εὖδοξάτην μοι δυο γυναῖκ' εὖειμονε,
 ἡ μὲν πέπλοισι Περσικοῖς ἤσκημένη,
 ἡ δ' αὖτε Δωρικοῖσιν, εἰς ὅπην μολεῖν,
 μεγέθει τε τῶν νῦν εκπρεπεστάτα πολὺ
 κάλλει τ' ἀμώμα, καὶ κοσμηθέντα γένους
 ταύτου· πάτραι δ' ἔναιον ἡ μὲν Ἑλλάδα
 κλήρω λαχοῦσα γαῖαν, ἡ δὲ βάρβαρον
 τουτο στάσιν τιν', ὥς ἐγὼ δοῖκουν ὄραν,
 τευχεν ἐν ἀλλήλαισι παῖς δ' ἐμὸς μαθὼν
 κατεῖχε κάπρουνεν, ἄρμασιν δ' ὑπο
 ζεύγνυσιν αὐτῷ καὶ λέπαδν' ὑπ' αὐχένων
 τίθησι, γῆ μὲν τῇδ' ἐπισφουῖτο στολῇ
 ἐν ἡνίασι τ' εἶχεν εὐαρκτον στόμα
 ἡ δ' ἐσφαδαζε, καὶ χεροῖν ἐντῇ διορου
 19^s διασπαρασσει καὶ ἑναρπαζει βία
 σινε χαλινῶν καὶ ζυγοῖ θραυεῖ ὤσον
 πίπτει δ' ἐμὸς παῖς καὶ πατήρ παριστάται
 Δαρεῖος οὐκτηρῶν σφε' τὸν δ' ὅπως ὄρῃ
 Ξερξῆς, πέπλους ρήγνυσιν ἀμφὶ σωματι
 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ νυκτὸς εἰσιδεῖν λέγω
 ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνεστήν καὶ χεροῖν καλλυπρῶσιν
 ἑψαυσα πηγῆς, σὺν θυμιάλει χερσὶ

194 ἐντῇ Seidler ἐν τῇ vel am. codd.

will tell you about it. There seemed to come into my sight two finely
 dressed women, one arrayed in Persian, the other in Doric robes,
 outstandingly superior in stature to the women of real life of flawless
 beauty and sisters of the same stock: one by the fall of the lot, was a
 native and inhabitant of the land of Greece, the other of the Orient. I
 seemed to see these two raising some kind of strife between
 themselves: my son, perceiving this, tried to restrain and calm them,
 yoked them under his chariot, and passed the yoke-strap under their
 necks. One of them, thus arrayed, towered up proudly and kept her
 jaw submissively in harness; but the other began to struggle, tore the
 harness from the chariot with her hands, dragged it violently along
 without bridle or bit, and smashed the yoke in half. My son fell out.
 His father Darius appeared, standing beside him and showing pity,
 but when Xerxes saw him, he tore the robes that clothed his body.
 That I saw is what I saw in the night. When I had risen and washed
 my hands in a fair flowing spring, I approached the altar with
 offerings.

30 Aeschylus chooses to dress the woman representing Greece as "Doric" rather than "Ionic" style, not because he is imagining her as a Dorian Greek (e.g. a Spartan)—both styles were in use in the Athens of his day—but because the Doric chiton (typically woollen, and pinned at the shoulders) symbolized Greek simplicity, in contrast to Persian luxury: more effectively than the Ionic (draped, and often of fine linen). Both styles are seen, for example, on an amphora of about 460 BC in Oxford (Ashmolean 280) showing a father, mother and sister bidding farewell to a departing warrior; see S. Lewis, *The Athenian Woman* (London, 2002) 41 fig. 1.22.

31 Frequently in this play Persians speak of themselves as βαρβαροί, properly a Greek term for those who did not speak the Greek language. I have translated this throughout as "orient(al)" or "Eastern(er)" (but in other plays, where the term is used by Greeks, I have retained the traditional rendering "barbarian").

βωμῶν προσέστην ἀποτροπαίει δαίμονιν
 θελοῦσα θυγατρὸς πέλαγον· ὦν τε, ἡ τὰ δα.
 105 ὁρῶ δὲ φευγόντ' αἰετον πρὸς ἐσθλὰραν
 Φοῖβου φοβέω ὁ ἄφθονος ἐστίαθ' ἐφ' οἷ
 μέθυστερον δὲ κίρκον εἰσορῶ ὄραμα
 πτεροῖς ἀφορμαίνοντα καὶ χηλαῖς κάρα
 πύλλονθ'· ὁ δ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο γ' ἢ πτήξας δέμας
 110 παρείχετ' αὐτὸν ἐμοὶ τε δειματ' εἰσιδεῖν
 ὑμῖν τ' ἀκούειν· εὖ γὰρ ἴστα, καὶ ἐμὸς
 πράξας μὲν εὖ θαυμαστός ἂν γένοιτ' ἄνηρ
 κακῶς δὲ πράξας—οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει
 σωθεὶς δ' ὁμοίως τῆσδε κοίραν' εἰ χθονός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ σε βουλόμεσθα, μήτηρ, οὐτ' ἄγαν φοβεῖν λόγοις
 οὐτε θαρσυνεῖν· θεοὺς δὲ προστροπαῖς ἀνσυνέτη,
 εἴ τι φλαυῖρον εἶδες, αἰτοῦ τῶνδ' ἀποτροπήν τελευτῇ.

210 ἐμοὶ τε Blomfield ἐμοὶ b ἐμοὶς M1 b k
 210 εἰσιδεῖν Hartung. ἄς ὦσιν vel αὐτ. M1 b (ἐστ' ἐσάδεν b)· ἐστ' ὦσιν vel
 αὐτ. I b k.
 211 ε k δ M1 b

in my hand, wishing to pour a rich libation to the deities who avert
 evil, for whom such rites are appropriate. Then I saw an eagle fleeing
 for refuge to the altar of Phoebus—and I was rooted speechless to
 the spot with terror, my friends. Next I saw a hawk swooping on him
 at full speed with beating wings, and tearing at his head with its
 talons—and he simply cowered and submitted.” This was
 terrifying for me to behold, and must be terrifying for you to hear, for
 you know well that if my son were successful he would be a very
 much admired man, but were he to fail—well, he is not accountable
 to the community—and if he comes home safe he remains ruler of
 this land.

chorus

Mother, we do not wish to say what would make you either unduly
 fearful or unduly optimistic. You should approach the gods with
 supplications and ask them, if there was anything sinister in what you
 saw, to ensure that it is averted.

32 The omen is easy to interpret (as is evident from the fact that Aeschylus
 leaves his audience to interpret it for themselves)—that the mother of the greatest
 of human kings, full of anxiety about his fate, sees the “king of birds”
 (Agamemnon 114) fleeing from a bird of lesser status and submitting without
 resistance to degrading treatment, speaks for itself. Various explanations have
 been offered for why the eagle is represented as seeking the altar of Phoebus
 (Apollo) in particular. I suggest that the point is that the eagle is going to the worst
 possible place—for the eagle is the bird of Zeus, not Apollo, and the latter, though
 his best-known avian connection is with swans, also has one with hawks (Iliad
 15.237; Odyssey 15.526; Aristophanes, Birds 516). Contrast Aesop, Fable 3 Perry,
 where the eagle seeks sanctuary from an enemy by nesting in the lap of Zeus. Has
 Xerxes too gone to the most unpropitious place he could have chosen?

33 No real hawk would or could do this (even if, per impossible, it were to
 attack an eagle), but cf. Odyssey 15.526–7.

34 lit. “provided his body” (to be abused).

35 Unlike an Athenian general such as Miltiades, who not long after his
 victory at Marathon was nearly sentenced to death for failing to capture Persia, and
 eventually died in prison (Herodotus 6.136; Plato, Gorgias 516d–e; Plutarch,
 Cimon 4.4).

τὰ δ' ἀγαθ' ἐκτελεῖ γενεοῦμαι σοὶ τε καὶ τέκνονι
σέθεν
καὶ πόλει φίλοις τε πᾶσι· δευτερον δὲ γῆν χροῖς
220 Γῆ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς χερασθαι· κρεμνενῶς δ' αἰετῷ
ταδε,
σὸν ποσιν Δαρεῖον, ὅν περ φης ἰδεῖν κατ' εὐφρόντην,
ἐσθλὰ σοὶ πέμψεν τέκνον τε γῆς ἔνερθεν εἰς φάος,
τάμπαιον δὲ τῶνδε γαίᾳ κάτοχ' ἀμαυροῦσθαι
σκοιτω
ταῦτα θυμώμαντις ὦν σοὶ κρεμνενῶς παρήτσα,
εὖ δὲ πανταχῇ τελεῖν σοὶ τῶνδε κρένομεν περὶ

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἀλλὰ μὴν εὖνους γ' ὁ πρότερος τῶνδ' ἐνυκνίων κρατῆς
παιδί καὶ δομοῖς ἐμοῖσι τήνδ' ἐκυρασσας φάτιν
εκτελοῖτο δὴ τὰ χρηστά· ταῦτα δ' ὥς ἐφίεσαι
πάντα θήσομεν θεοῖσι τοῖς τ' ἔνερθε γῆς φίλοις,
εὖτ' ἐν εἰς οἴκους μολώμεν· κέθνο δ' ἐκμαθεῖν θέλω,
ὅ φῖλοι ποῦ πᾶς Ἀθήνας φασιν ἰδρῦσθαι χθονός,

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τῆλε πρὸς δυσμαῖ, σὺν αἰτοῖ, Ἡλίου φθινάσμεντες

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἀλλὰ μὴν ἴμεν· ἐμὸς παῖς τήνδε θηράσσει πόλιν;

218 τὰ δ' ἀγαθ' b k: τὰ δ' ἀγαθὰ δ' M b: τὰ δ' ἀγαθὰ γ' k: τὰγαθὰ δ' vel
sum f b.
228 ὅη k (?) x de M f b k
230 κέθνο b: κέθνα M f b k

but that what was good should be fulfilled for you, for your children,
for the community, and for everyone that you care for. Secondly, you
should pour drink-offerings to Earth and to the dead, and propitiate
them with this prayer: that your husband Darius, whom you say you
saw in the night, should send up to the light, from beneath the earth,
blessings for you and your son, but that whatever is contrary to them
be kept under the earth, ineffective, in the darkness. Using my
intelligence – to prophesy for you, I gave you this advice in all good
will – and our interpretation of these signs is that things will turn out
well for you in every way.

queen

Yes – as the first interpreter of this dream you have shown yourself
loyal to my son and my house in the very definite words you have
spoken. May what was good indeed be fulfilled. We shall make all
these arrangements as you advise, towards the gods and towards our
friends beneath the earth, when we return home. But there is
something I wish to learn, my friends. Where in the world do they
say that Athens is situated?

chorus

Far away, near the place where the Lord Sun declines and sets.

queen

And yet my son had a desire to conquer that city?

36 sc. rather than any divine inspiration, or any training in seer-craft.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πάντα γὰρ γένοιτ' ἐν Ἑλλάς βασιλῆος ὑπερκτος.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

235 ὦδὲ τις πείρασιν αὐτοῖς ἀνδροκλήθειαν στρατοῦ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

236 καὶ στρατός τοιούτος, ἔρχας πολλὰ δὴ Μήδους
κτεκὰ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

239 ποτερά γὰρ τοξουλκός αἶγμή διὰ χειρῶν αὐτοῖς
πρέπει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

24 μηδαμῶς ἔγχη σταδαῖα καὶ φερόσπιδες σάγαι.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

καὶ τί πρὸς τούτοιςιν ἄλλο; πλοῦτος ἐξαρκής;
δόμοις;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

248 ἀργυροῦ πηγὴ τις αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ, θησαυρός χθονός.

239-240 transposed by Trendelenburg to precede 237.
239 χειρῶν b (χειρῶν ΣΦ): χειρός vel arm. M 1 b k.

chorus

Yes, because all Greece would then become subject to the King

queen

Do they have such great numbers of men in their army?

chorus

And an army of a quality that has already done the Medes³⁷ a great deal of harm.

queen

Why are they distinguished for their wielding of the drawn bow and its darts³⁸?

chorus

Not at all: they use spears for close combat and carry shields for defence.

queen

And what else apart from that? Is there sufficient wealth in their stores³⁹?

chorus

They have a fountain of silver, a treasure in their soul.

37 This was also the view of Herodotus (7.139).

38 *sc.* in comparison with other Greeks. At the battle of Plataea in 479, the Athenian hoplite force was larger than that of any other state in the Greek alliance except Sparta (Herodotus 9.28.2-29.1)—and only half the Spartan hoplites were full citizens.

39 The Medes and the Persians were actually distinct (though kindred) peoples, but in ordinary Greek usage, and in this play (cf. 791), the two names are treated as synonymous, what we call "the Persian wars" Greeks normally called *ta Mēdōn*.

40 Referring mainly to the capture and burning of Sardis in 498, and the victory of Marathon in 490.

41 *lit.* "is the bow-drawn *εὐρω-σποντ* conspicuous in their hands?"

42 Referring to the silver mines of Laureum, where a rich new vein was discovered a few years before the Persian invasion—and exploited, by the advice of Themistocles, for the building of the fleet that won the battle of Salamis (Herodotus 7.144).

ÆSCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

741 τίς δὲ ποιμάνων ἔπεσσι κἀπιθεσπόζει στρατῷ,

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐτενα, δοῦλοι κ' ἐκλήνται φάτο, οὐδ' ὑπηκοοί.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

πῶς ἔν σὺν μένουσιν ἄνδρας πολέμους ἐπηλύδας,

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὥστε Δαρείου πολλὴν τε καὶ καλὴν φθεῖραι στρατὸν

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

745 δεινὰ τοι λέγεις κiónτων τοῖς τεκοῦσι φροντισαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν ταχ' εἴσῃ πάντα ναμερτὴ λόγον
τοῦδε γὰρ δράμημα φαιδρὸς Περσικὸν κρέπαι μαθεῖν,
καὶ φέρει σαφές τι πρᾶγος ἐσθλὸν ἢ κακὸν κλυεῖν

ΑἴΤΕΛΟΣ

ὦ γῆς ἀπάσης Ἀσίδος πόλιστατα,
250 ὦ Περσίς αἶα καὶ πολὺς πλοῦτος λιμὴν,
ὡς ἐν μὲτ' ἀπληγῇ κατέφθαρται πολὺς
ἄλβος, το Περσῶν δ' ἄνθος οἴχεται πρῶν

245 κίωντων Wecklein. κόντων codd.

PERSIANS

queen

And who is the shepherd, master and commander over their host?

chorus

They are not called slaves or subjects to any man.

queen

How then can they resist an invading enemy?

chorus

Well enough to have destroyed the large and splendid army of Darius

queen

What you say is fearful to think about, for the parents of those who
have gone there

[A MESSENGER is seen approaching from the west, in great haste.]

chorus

Well, it seems to me that you will soon know the whole story
precisely. The way this man runs clearly identifies him as Persian,
and he will be bringing some definite news, good or bad, for us to

know.

messenger

O you cities of the whole land of Asia! O land of Persia, Repository
of great wealth. How all your great prosperity has been destroyed in a
single blow, and the flower of the Persians are fallen and departed
[To the chorus] Ah me, it

43 This has been seen as a reference to the Persians' system of fast couriers (Aeschylus alludes to them at *Agamemnon* 282—but they were mounted), or as a chiasmatic gibe, from a Greek point of view, at Persians' alleged cowardice (they run very fast—away from the enemy); more likely it is simply based on observation of the actual running styles of Greeks and Persians respectively. It would not be surprising if these styles tended to differ, given that Greek running techniques had been honed by many generations of athletic competition.

44 lit. "harbour"

ÆSCHYLUS

ὦμοι, κακὸν μὲν πρῶτον ἀγγέλλειν κακὰ
 ὅμῃς, δ' ἀνάγκη πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι κάθος,
 255 Πέρσαι· στρατός γάρ πᾶς ὅλωλε βαρβάρων

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σπ α ἄντα ἀνία νεοκτοῖα καὶ
 δαί· αἰαί, διακινεσθῆ, Περ-
 σαι, τοῦ ἄχος κ' ὤκνῳτες

Αἴτελος

260 ὥς πάντα γ' ἔστ' ἐκτίνα διαπεπραγμένα
 καυτός δ' ἀέλπτος νόστιμον βλέπω φάος

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀν κ ἤ μακροβίος ὁδε γέ τις αἰ-
 ῶν ἐωάνθη γεραίοις, ἀκού-
 265 εἰν τόδε πῆμ' ἀελπτον

Αἴτελος

καὶ μὴν παρὼν γε κοῦ λόγους ἄλλων κλυῶν,
 Πέρσαι, φράσαιμ' ἂν οἱ ἐπορσύνθη κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σπ β ὅτοτοτοῖ, μέγαν
 τα πόλλα βέλστα παμμνή
 270 γὰρ ἀπ' Ἀσίδος ἤρθ' ἐκ' αἶαν
 1 Δίαν, Ἑλλάδα χωρᾶν

256 after ἀνί(α) ἀνία codd. add κακά (van b, κακά λυαίου λυαίου b): del.
 Prieen.

266 γε b k. τα M I b k (b adds γε before χωρᾶν).

268 ὅτοτοτοῖ M I in 274 codd. here, and b k in 274, vary (ὅτοτοτοῖ in most).

PERSIANS

is terrible to be the first to announce terrible news, but I have no
 choice but to reveal the whole sad tale, Persians: the whole of the
 oriental army has been destroyed!

chorus

Painful, painful, unheard-of,
 calamitous! Asia, let your tears flow, Persians,
 on hearing this grievous news!

messenger

I assure you: all those forces are annihilated, and I myself never
 expected to see the day of my return.

chorus

Truly this old life of ours
 has proved itself too long, when we hear
 this sorrow beyond all expectation!

messenger

And I can also tell you Persians what kinds of horrors came to pass.
 I was there myself: I did not merely hear the reports of others.

chorus

Otototoi! It was all in vain
 that those many weapons, all mingled together,
 went from the land of Asia to the country
 of Zeus, the land of Heilax!

45 i.e. we wish we had not lived to hear this news.

46 Hellen, the eponymous ancestor of the Hellenes, was often said to have
 been a son of Zeus (e.g. Euripides fr. 481 1–2); later the chorus (532–6), Darius
 (739–740) and by implication Xerxes himself (913–7) will attribute the Persian
 disaster to Zeus.

AESCHYLUS

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἦρκεν τοῦτα, πᾶς ὁ λαὸς / αὐτο
λεω, δαμπαθεῖ ναιῶσιν ἐμβροταί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

4 οἰοιοτοῖ φίλων
πν 5 πολυδόνα σωμαθ' ἀλβιαφῇ
κατιθανόντα / πρὶς φερεσθαι
π ἀγκυαῖς ἐν θυεῖ ἀκροσεν

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

πν 1 ηθούσι νεκρῶν δυσποτμῶν, εφθαρμέναν
Σαλαμῖνος ἄκται πᾶς τε προσχωρος τοπος

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ως' ἀπότμοις βοῶν
πν 1 δυσσαιωνῇ + Περσαις δαίσις +
ὥς πάντα παγκάκως θέσαν
<δαιμονες> αἰαῖ στρατοῦ φθαρέντος.

272-3 and 278-9 interchanged by Stavrakas.

279 λέως ἐ: στρατος M I b k.

275 πολυδόνα σωμαθ' ἀλβιαφῇ Pries. ἀλιδοῖνα σωματα πολυβοφῇ codd

277 δαλαιοσισεν codd. πιναισισεν (and πλαινκοῖς) Stavrakas.

280 ἀποτμοις West ἀποτμον codd.

281 Περσαις δαίσις codd (cf 236) φιλοις West

282-3 παγκάκως θέσαν Suer, <δαιμονες> Sommerstein. παγκάκως ἔθεσαν
codd. (θεοὶ add. b, cf ΣΦ) π. <θεοὶ> θέσαν Hainsworth.

PERSIANS

messenger

Yes, our archery was of no avail, the whole host perished, destroyed
by the ramming of ships.

chorus

Otototoi, you are saying
that the dead bodies of our loved ones
are floating, soaked and constantly buffeted by salt water,
shrouded in mantles that drift in the waves!

messenger

The shores of Salamina and all the region near them are full of
corpses wretchedly slain.

chorus

Raise a crying voice of woe
for the wretched fate of <our loved ones>,⁴⁷
for the way <the gods> have caused
total disaster! Aiai, for our destroyed army!

47 The transposition of the Messenger's two responses (proposed by J Stavrakas, *Quelques remarques critiques sur les Perses d'Eschyle* [Paris, 1890] 11-14, and again by K. Sier, *Hermes* 133 [2005] 410-4) is necessary: there is nothing in 272-3 (below), nor earlier, to reveal to the chorus that the catastrophic battle was fought at sea, yet 274-7 shows that they have been told this.

48 The Persians' shrouded garments (comparable to the δαλαιοῖν καλὴν πορφυρεῖν that Odysseus was given by his supposed Cretan host, *Odyssey* 19.241-2) have become their funeral robes—except that they will have no funerals. Attractive, however, is Stavrakas' emendation πλαινκοῖς ἐν πιναισισεν 'among the drifting planks' (cf *Odyssey* 12.67).

49 The text has been corrupted by the intrusion of annotations from the margin; I translate a suggestion of West's (*Studies* 81).

AESCHYLUS

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

ὃ πλείστοις ἔγθοι ὄνομα Σαλαμῖνός κεν
φρυγίων Ἀθηνῶν ὡς στενωμένον

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔτι γὰρ στυγαί γε δαΐδαι
μνησθῆναι τοὶ παρὰ
ὧν Περσίδων πόλιν μάταια
ἐνυδάς ἔκτισσαν ἢ δ' ἀνδρῶν

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

σὺ γὰρ παλαιὸς δυστήνας ἐκτελέρημεν
κακοῖς υπερβάνει γὰρ ἡδὲ συμφορὰ
τὸ μήτε λέξαι μήτ' ἐρωτῆσαι τόθι
οὐ μὲν δ' ἀνάνη πημονῆς βροτοῖς οὐρεῖ
θεῶν οἰόσιν ταν πᾶν δ' ἀναπτύξας παθὸς
λέξον καταστάς, καὶ στένει κακοῖς οὐ μὲν
τις οὐ τεθνήκε· τινὰ δὲ καὶ τεθνησομένη
τῶν ἀρχαίων οὐκ ἐπὶ σκήπτου γὰρ
ταχθεὶς ἀνάνηρος ταχὺν ἡρώου θάπτει

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

Ἐρξέην μὲν αὐτοῦ ζῆτε καὶ φασὶ βλεπείν—

286 γε in Conradt γὰρ b k θ b om b Athenaei vel smi codd.

288 Περσίδων πολιν Wel πολιν, Persiden codd.

289 ἐνυδάς ἐκτισσαν Boeckh ἐκτισαν ἐνυδάς vel smi codd.

PERSIANS

messenger

How utterly loathsome is the name of Salamis to my ears! Ah, how I
groan when I remember Athens!

chorus

She is indeed hateful to her foes
we can remember well
how many Persian women they caused
to be bereaved and widowed, all for nothing.

queen [to the MESSENGER]

I have been silent all this time because I was struck dumb with
misery by this catastrophe. The event is so monstrous that one can
neither speak nor ask about the sufferings it involved. Still, we
mortals have no choice but to endure the sorrows the gods send us, so
compose yourself and speak, revealing all that has happened, even if
you are groaning under the weight of the disaster. Who has survived,
and which of the leaders of the host must we mourn, who after being
assigned to hold a staff of command perished and so left his post
deserted and unmanned?

messenger

Well, Xerxes himself is alive and sees the light of day—

50 This passage and 324 suggest that the tale was already current of how
after the burning of Sardis Darius ordered a slave to say to him thrice every day
before dinner: Master, remember the Athenians. (Herodotus 9.105)

51 Referring mainly to Marathon (cf. 236, 244): μάταια, which has often
been queried (e.g. West, *Studies* 81–82), is to be understood from the Persian
point of view—their women's husbands and sons were killed in a futile cause.

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

301 ἐμοῖ. ἀν εἶπας δαίμων φάος μέγα
καὶ ἰσχυρὸν ἡμῶν νύκτος ἐκ μεσσηνίου

Αἴτελοι

Ἀρτεμίδης δὲ μυριάς ὑπὸν βραβείν
στυφλοῦς παρ' ἀκτῆς θένεται Σιληναῶν
χρὺ χίλιάρχος Δαδῆος κληνῇ δορός
5 πηδῆμα κοῦφον ἐκ νεῶς ἀσπλάτο
Τενάγων τ' ἄριστος Βακτριῶν ἰθαγενής
θάλασσοπληκτον νήσον Αἴαντος πόλει
Αἰλαῖος Ἀρσάμης τε κάρηστής τρίτος,
οἷο ἀμφιγῆσαι τῇ πελειθερμύονα
310 νικώμενοι κυρίσσει ἰσχυρὰν χθονά,
311 πηγαῖς τε Νεῖλου γειτονῶν Αἰγυπτίου
313 Φαρναύχος, οἳ τε νεὸς ἐκ μῆδ' ἔπειον
312 Ἀρκεύς, Ἀδευής, καὶ Φερεσσένης τρίτος,
315 ὑπὸν μέλαντι, ἡγεμὼν τρισμυρίας
314 Χρυσεύς, Ματάλλος, μυρίων τάρχο, θανόν
316 πυρσὴν ζαυλῆθ' ἑσπέρων γενεῖάδα
ἔτεγγ' ἀμείβων χροῖτα πορφυρεῖ βασιῇ

PERSIANS

queen

To my house at least your words come as a great relief, like bright
day shining out after a pitch-dark night

messenger

But Artembares, the commander of ten thousand horse, is being
pounded against the rugged shores of Silenae; Dadaces,
commander of a thousand, was struck by a spear and took an
effortless leap out of his ship and the excellent Tenagon, a noble of
the Bactrians now wanders around the wave-beaten island of Ajax
Lilaeus. Arsames and Argestes, these three vanquished men were
beating their heads against the hard rocks around the island where
doves breed, as was Pharnuchus, whose home was near the stream
of Egyptian Nile and three who fell from one ship Arceus, Adeus
and Pherses leader of thirty thousand dark-skinned horsemen
Matallus of Chrysa, commander of ten thousand, perished, his full,
bushy reddish beard got a soaking and a purple dye changed the

313, 312 transposed by Martin.

315, 314 transposed by Hainsworth.

52 lit. "light"

53 According to the scholia (as emended with the help of Hesychius), this
name was given to a part of the coastline of Salamis near "Trophy Point".
Probably the reference is to one side of the long peninsula of Cynosura at the
eastern extremity of the island.

54 πηλαί would normally imply wandering or ranging across the actual
territory of the island, but here the context, and the audience's knowledge, make it
clear that what is meant is that Tenagon's corpse is drifting around its shores.

55 This may be another way of describing Salamis, or may designate a small
island in its vicinity.

56 This line (315) is clearly out of place where it stands in the text, since
Matallus could not be described both as a "commander of ten thousand" and as a
"leader of thirty thousand".

57 Possibly the town of this name in the Troad is meant (cf. *Iliad* 1.37), or
possibly the place-name ("city of gold") is an invented one, cf. the "Golden
Mountains" of Persia in Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 82).

58 sc. of blood.

AESCHYLUS

και Μᾶγος Ἀραβος Ἀρτάβης τε Βάκτριος,
 σκληρᾶς μέτοικος γῆς, ἐκεῖ κατέφθιτο
 310 Ἀμιστρίς Ἀμφιστρεΐς τε πολυπονον ὄρου
 νημῶν, ὃ κ' ἐσθλὸς Ἀριόμαρδος ἄρδεσιν
 πένθος παρὰσχών, Τεισάμης θ' ὁ Μύσιος,
 Θάρυβις τε πεντήκοντα πενταῖας νεῶν
 ταχὺς γένος Λυρναῖος, εὐειῶς ἀνὴρ,
 κείται θανάων δεῖλαιος σὺ μάλ' εὐτυχῶς
 Σύννεσις τε, πρῶτος εἰς εὐηνύχον,
 Κύλαων ἑπαρχος, εἷς ἀνὴρ κλειστόν πόνον
 ἐχθροῖς παρὰσχών, εὐκλέως ἀπώλετο
 τοσσόνδ' ἑπαρχόντων ὑπεμνήσθην περὶ
 πολλῶν παρόντων δ' ὀλίγ' ἀπαγγέλλω κακὰ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

αἰᾶ, κακῶν ὕψιστα δὴ κλῶω τάδε,
 αἴσχη τε Πέρσας καὶ λιγέα κακώματα
 ἀτὰρ φράσον μοι τοῦτ' ἀναστρέψας πάλιν
 πόσον νεῶν δὴ πλῆθος ἦν Ἑλληνίδων,
 ὥστ' ἀξιώσαι Περσικῷ στρατεύματι
 μάτην ξυναψαι ναιῶισι ἐμβόλαι.

321 ἄρδεσι (v) Bothe. Σαρδεσι codd.

322 θ κ om M I b k. 326 Σύννεσις Turnebus: συννεσις M b: συνεσις vel
 sum. I b k

329 τοσσόνδ' ἑπαρχόντων Heinsius edd. τοσσόνδ' (τοσσόνδ' γ z) ἄρχόντων (M b
 k vñ add. I b k) codd.

334 νεῶν δὴ πλῆθος ἦν Mitzig edd. δὴ (δὲ b k) πλῆθος ἦν νεῶν codd.

PERSIANS

colour of his skin. And Magnus the Arab and Artabes the Bactrian,
 now a permanent resident in a harsh country, perished there too; and
 Amistria, and Amphistrens who wielded a spear that caused much
 trouble, and brave Ariomardus who dispensed grief with his arrows,
 and Sesames the Mysian, and Tharybas, admiral of five times fifty
 ships, a Lytnaean by birth⁵⁹ and a handsome man, lies wretchedly
 dead, having enjoyed no very good fortune. And Synnensis,
 foremost in courage, the leader of the Cilicians, who gave more
 trouble to the enemy than any other single man, met a glorious end.
 All this I report about the commanders, but I have mentioned only a
 small part of the great suffering that there was.

queen

Aiai, this is truly the most towering disaster I have ever heard of, a
 cause for shame and for shrill wailing to the Persians! But go back to
 the beginning and tell me this: how great were the actual numbers of
 the Greek ships, that they thought themselves capable of joining
 battle with the Persian fleet and ramming their vessels?

59 This adjective should derive from a place-name Lytna, ancient scholars knew of no such place, and could only suggest that it was an abbreviated form of Lytnaeum in the Troad (cf. n. 57).

60 Synnensis is the only member of Xerxes' expedition named in the play, except the King himself, who can be firmly identified with an actual person. This "name" was the title of all the kings of Cilicia (in south-eastern Asia Minor), and its contemporary bearer led the Cilician contingent of Xerxes' fleet (Herodotus 7.98).

AESCHYLUS

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

πλήθος· μὲν ἂν σὺν ἴσθ' ἑκατι βαρβαρῶν
 ναῦς, ἂν κρατήσῃ· καὶ γὰρ Ἑλλήσπεσσι μὲν ἦν
 ὁ πᾶς ἀριθμὸς, εἰς τριακᾶδά, ὅσκι
 ναῦς· δεκά, δ' ἦν τῶνδε γὰρ, ἑκκρίτος·
 Περσῶν δέ, καὶ γὰρ οἶδ'α, γιγᾶς, μὲν ἦν
 ἂν ἦγε πλήθος, αἱ δ' ὑπερκοποὶ τά/εἰ
 ἑκατὸν δὲ ἦσαν ἑπταθ' ὅδ' ἔχει λόγος·
 μή σοι δοκοῦμεν τῆδε χειρὶ θῆαι μάχη;
 αὐτὸν ὅδε σάισμα, τί, καταφθείρε στρατοὺς
 τῶνδε βρισάς, οὐκ ἰσχυροῦσι τύχη,
 θεοὶ πόλιν σφύρονσι Παλλὰδος θεᾶς.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἔτ' ἄρ' Ἀθηνῶν ἔστι ἀπόρθητος πόλις.

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

αὐτῶν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀσφαλὲς.

339 ναῦς, ἂν· Hauptsoeth· ναυσι· codd.

342 ὑπερκοποὶ Wakefield· ὑπερκομῶσι· codd. Plutarch Themistocles 14.

344 μάχη, Todt· μάχη· codd.

PERSIANS

messenger

I assure you that, so far as numbers are concerned, the fleet of the Easterners would have prevailed. The Greeks had a grand total of about three hundred ships – and ten of these formed a special select squadron – whereas Xerxes—I know this for sure—had a thousand under his command, and those of outstanding speed numbered two hundred and seven. Such is the reckoning. I hardly imagine you will consider we were inferior in that respect in the battle.⁶¹ It was some divinity that destroyed our fleet like this, weighting the scales so that fortune did not fall out even: the gods have saved the city of the goddess Pallas.

queen

Then the city of Athens is still unsacked?

messenger

While she has her men, her defences are secure.

61. In 'ten threes of ships' Herodotus 8.43–48 gives the total of the Greek fleet as 355, of which 150 were Athenian. The Persian messenger cannot of course give an exact figure, and Aeschylus rounds down rather than up so as to maximize the disparity between the two fleets.

62. The natural way of understanding this is to take the 207 extra-fast ships to be part of the total of 300, just as the ten ships of the Greek elite squadron are part of their total of 300. Herodotus (7.189–1, 7.184–1) seems to have read the passage otherwise, for he gives the total numbers of the Persian fleet, when it first reached Greece, as precisely 1207: they suffered, however, according to his narrative, severe losses before Salamis (by storm, and in the battle of Artemisium), and at Salamis they did not greatly outnumber the Greeks (8.13, contrast 8.66 where he implausibly claims that the losses were made good by reinforcements from subjugated Greek states).

63. This either alludes to, or else it inspired, the story of Themistocles' retort to the Corinthian Ademantus at the Greek council of war which finally decided to stand and fight at Salamis. Ademantus had tried to silence Themistocles, and prevent his proposal being put to a vote, because Themistocles was "a man without a city", Attica having been evacuated by its population, its territory occupied by the Persians, and the city sacked and burned; to which Themistocles replied "We have a city and a country greater than yours, while we have two hundred ships and their crews" (Herodotus 8.61).

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

αρχὴ δὲ ναυσι συμβῶν ἦ, τι, ἦν φράσσιν
 τίνες κπιτῆρδεν, ποτερον Ἑλλήνες, μάχης,
 ἢ παῖς ἐμός, πλήθει καταυγῆσας νεῶν;

ΑΙΤΕΛΟΣ

- ἦρξεν μὲν, ὦ δέσποινα, τοῖ κεντος κακῷ
 φανεις ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν
 355 ἀνὴρ γάρ Ἑλλήν ἐξ Ἀθηναίων στρατοῦ
 ἐλθὼν ἔλεξε παιδί σφ' Ξερξῇ τὰδε,
 ὥς εἰ μελαινης νυκτός ἴζεται κνέφος,
 Ἑλλήνες οὐ μενοῖεν, ἀλλὰ σέλμασιν
 νεῶν ἐπανθορόντες ἄλλος ἄλλοσε
 360 δρασμῷ κρυφαίῳ βίοντον ἐκωσσοῖατο
 ὁ δ' εὐθύς ὥς ἤκουσεν, οὐ ξυνεις δόλον
 Ἑκατος ἀνδρὸς οὐδε τοι θεῶν φθόνου
 πᾶσιν προφανεῖ τόνδε ναυάρχους λόγον
 εὖτ' ἐν φλέγων ἀκτίσιν ἥλιος χθόνα
 365 λήσῃ, κνέφος δὲ τέμενος αἰθέρος λαβῇ,
 ταῖσαι νεῶν στίβος μὲν ἐν στοιχοῖς τρισὶν
 ἐκπλοὺς φυλάσσειν καὶ παρούς ἀλιρρόθους,
 ἄλλας δὲ κυκλῶ νῆσον Αἰάντος πέριξ
 ὥς εἰ μορον φευξοῖσθ' Ἑλλήνες κακοῖν,
 ναυσὶν κρυφαίως δρασμον εὐρόντες τινὰ,
 πᾶσι στερεῶσθαι κρατὸς ἦν προκειμένον
 τοσαῦτ' ἔλεξε, καρθ' ὅπ' εὐθυμοῦ φρενός
 σὺ γὰρ τὸ μέλλον ἐκ θεῶν ἤκιστα το

360 ἐκωσσοῖατο Mssic ἐκωσσοῖατο πιν b codd

PERSIANS

queen

But tell me how the naval battle began. Who started the fight? Was it
 the Greeks, or was it my son, proudly confident in the superior
 numbers of his fleet?

messenger

The start of all our sorrows, mistress, was the appearance from
 somewhere of an avenging demon or an evil spirit. A Greek man
 came from the Athenian fleet and told your son Xerxes that when
 the gloom of black night should come on, the Greeks would not stay
 where they were but would leap on to the benches of their ships and
 seek to save their lives by taking to flight in all directions under cover
 of the darkness. As soon as he heard this, not understanding the
 deceit of the Greek or the jealousy of the gods, he proclaimed the
 following order to all his admirals. When the sun ceased to burn the
 earth with its rays and darkness took hold of the celestial regions,
 they were to arrange the mass of their ships in three lines and guard
 the exits and the surging straits while stationing others so as to
 surround the island of Ajax completely because if the Greeks
 should escape grim death by finding some means of escaping
 unnoticed with their ships, it was decreed that all the admirals were to
 lose their heads. So much he said speaking from a very cheerful
 heart because he did not understand what the gods were about to do
 and they, obediently

54 This was the slave Sicinnos, bringing a message from his master
 Themistocles (Herodotus 8.75)

55 i.e. from the bay of Eleusis north of Salamis, especially the straits at the
 eastern end of the island (cf. Herodotus 8.76.1).

56 And, in particular, to watch the western exit from the bay, on the
 Megarian side (ibid.)

AESCHYLUS

οἱ δ' οὐκ ἀκοσμίῳ, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἄργον φρενὶ
 δεῦνον τ' ἐπορεύοντο, ναυβατῆ, τ' ἀνὴρ
 τροποῦτο κωπη σκαλμον ἀμφ' εὐρησμένων
 ἐπεὶ δὲ φέγγος ἡλίου κατεσθίτο
 καὶ νύξ' ἐλθῆι, πᾶς ἀνὴρ κωπῆς ἀνάξ
 εἰ, ναῦν ἐχώρει πᾶς θ' ὀπίσσω ἐπιστάτῃ,
 ταῖς δὲ ταῖς παρεκάλει νεὸς μακράς,
 πλέουσι δ' ὦ, ἑκάστοι, ἢ τεταγμένους
 καὶ πάνυχοι δὴ διάπυρον καθίστασθαι
 ναῶν ἀνάκτες πάντα ναυτικοὺς ἄλσιν
 καὶ νύξ' ἐχώρει, κοῦ μᾶν Ἑλληνικὸν στρατόν,
 κρυφαῖον ἐκπλοῦν οὐδ' αὖθις καθίστατο
 ἐπεινε μέντοι λευκοκόμος ἡμερὰ
 πᾶσαι κατέσχευε ναῖαν εὐσεβήης ἰδέειν
 πρῶτον μὲν ἡγὴ κέλευθος Ἑλληνικὴν παρα
 μόλητόν, ἠροσημῆσαι ὀρθίον δ' ἀμὰ
 ἀντηλάλαξε ὑψωσιῶος πέτρας
 ἡγῶ φόβος δὲ πασι βαρβάρους παρῆν
 ἡρώης ἀποσσελῆσαι, οὐ γὰρ ὦ, φωνή
 παιδὸν ἐφύωντο σέμνον Ἑλλήνων, τότε
 αὖτ' εἰ μάτην ὀρμώμεται, ἐνψυγῶ θράσσει
 σάλπιγξ δ' αὐτῇ πάντ' ἐκεῖ ἐπεφλέγετο
 εὐθυς οὐ κωπῆ, ροθιάος ἵν' ἔμπεδον ἢ
 ἔταισαν ἀλμυρὸν βρυχιοὺς ἐκ κελεύματος
 θοῶς δὲ πάντες ἦσαν ἐπαρνεῖς ἰδεῖν
 τὸ δεξιὸν μὲν πρῶτον εὐτάκτως κέρας

375 δεῦνον τ' x δεῦνον M I b k

PERSIANS

and in good order prepared their supper, and each crew member fastened his oar by its loop to a thole-pin well designed for good rowing. When the light of the sun disappeared and night came on, every master of the oar and every man-at-arms went on board his ship, one rank encouraged another all along each vessel, and they sailed as each captain had been directed. All through the night, the masters of the fleet kept the whole naval host sailing to and fro. The night wore on, but the Greek force did not attempt a clandestine break-out in any direction at all. Instead, when Day with her white horses spread her brilliant light over all the earth, first of all there rang out loudly a joyful sound of song from the Greeks, and simultaneously the echo of it resounded back from the cliffs of the island. All we Easterners were terrified, because we had been deceived in our expectation: the Greeks were now raising the holy paean-song, not with a view to taking flight, but in the act of moving out to battle, with cheerful confidence, and the call of the trumpet was setting the whole place ablaze. At once, on a word of command they all pulled their oars together, struck the deep sea-water and made it roar—and then suddenly they were all there in plain sight. First there was the right wing, leading the way.

6 On these details of the trireme rower's equipment, see I. S. Morrison and R. T. Williams, *Greek Oared Ships 900-322 BC* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 269-284.

68 i.e. marine: the prose word would be *ἐπιβόρῃς*.

69 Cf. Odysseus 23.143-6 where Athene presents the Dawn-goddess from "yoking the swift horses, Lampon and Phaëthon, who convey [her] and bring light to men".

AESCHYLUS

- 411 ἡγεῖτο κοσμεῖν, ἑξήτερων δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὁπλοῖσιν
 ἐπελγῶσαι καὶ παρὴν ὁμοῦ κλυεῖν
 πολλὰν βοήην· ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε,
 ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ
 παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τε πατρώων ἕδη,
 412 θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγίων⁷⁰
 καὶ μὴν παρ' ἡμῶν Περσίδος γλώσσης ῥόθος
 ὑπὸ νηυσὶν ἀνέστη, κοῦκ' ἔτι νῆα μέλλειν ἄκμῃ.
 εὐθύς δ' ἐν ναῦς ἐν νηὶ χαλκίῃ στόλον
 ἔπαισεν ἥρξ' ἐμβολῆς Ἑλληνικῇ
 413 ναῦς, κάποθραυει πάντα Φοινίκης νεῶς
 κόρυμβ' ἐπ' ἄλλην δ' ἄλλος ἠύθυνεν δορυ.
 τὰ πρῶτα μὲν νῦν ρεύμα Περσικοῦ στρατοῦ
 ἀντεῖχεν, ὥς δ' ἐπλήθος ἐν στενῷ νεῶν
 ἠθροιστ', ἀρωγὴ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλήλοισι παρὴν.
 414 αὐτοὶ δ' ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐμβολαῖς / αἰχμηστομοῖς
 παύοντ', ἔθραυον πάντα κοπήν στόλον,
 Ἑλληνικαὶ τε νῆες οὐκ ἀφρασμόνας
 κυκλῶ περὶ ξέθενον· ὑπτιούτο δὲ
 σκῆπη νεῶν θάλασσα δ' οὐκέτι νῆα φεῖν
 415 ναυαγίων πλήθουσα καὶ φονὴν βροτῶν
 αἰετὶ δὲ νεκρῶν χοῖραδες τ' ἐπλήθυνον
 φυγῇ δ' ἀκόσμως πάσα ναῦς ἠρεασετο,
 ὅσπερ ἦσαν βαρβαροῦ στρατευματος
 τοὶ δ' ὥστε θυγνύουσ' ἢ τιν' ἐχθρῶν βόλον
 ἀγασσάμενοι θάνατον θραυμασίν τ' ἐρευνῶν

422 ἀποσπασμὸς ἢ ἀποσπασμός M I b k

PERSIANS

with good order and discipline, and then the whole fleet coming on
 behind, and from all of them together one could hear a great cry
 "Come on, sons of the Greeks, for the freedom of your homeland, for
 the freedom of your children, your wives, the temples of your fathers'
 gods, and the tombs of your ancestors! Now all is at stake!" And
 likewise from our side there was a surge of Persian speech in reply,
 the time for delay was past. At once one ship began to strike another
 with its projecting bronze beak, the first to ram was a Greek ship,
 which sheared off the whole stern of a Phoenician vessel, and then
 each captain chose a different enemy ship at which to run his own. At
 first the streaming Persian force resisted firmly, but when our masses
 of ships were crowded into a narrow space they had no way to come
 to each other's help: they got struck by their own side's bronze-
 pointed rams, they had the whole of their oarage smashed, and the
 Greek ships, with careful coordination, surrounded them completely
 and went on striking them. The hulls of our ships turned keel-up, and
 the sea surface was no longer visible, filled as it was with the
 wreckage of ships and the slaughter of men: the shores and reefs were
 also full of corpses. Even the remaining ship of the Eastern armada was
 being rowed away in disorderly flight: meanwhile the enemy were
 clubbing men and spitting their spines with broken pieces of oars
 and spars from the wreckage, as if they were tunny or some other
 catch of

⁷⁰ That of the Athenians, Amestrian of Pallene, according to Herodotus
 5.54.1.

AESCHYLUS

- ἔπειον, ἐρράγιζον σιμωγῇ δ' ὁμοῦ
κακώμασιν κατεῖχε πέλαγ' ἅλα,
ἔως κελαινὸν νοκτὸς ὅμι' ἀφείλετο
κακῶν δὲ πλῆθος, οὐδ' ἔν εἰ δέκ' ἤματα
430 σιτοπυγοροσιν, τὸν ἔν' ἐσκέλησάμην ποι
εὖ γὰρ τοδ' ἴσθι, μηδ' αὖ' ἡμέρα μὴ
πλῆθος τοσσιτάριθμον ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

αἰῶ, κακῶν δὴ πέλαγος ἔρρονεν μέγα
Πέρσαις τε καὶ πρόπαντι βαρβαρῶν γένει.

Αἴτελοις

- 135 εὖ νυν τόδ' ἴσθι, μηδέπω μεσσὺν κακῶν
τοιᾷδ' ἐκ αὐτοῖς ἦλθε συμφορὰ κάθους
ὥς τοῖσδε καὶ δις ἀντισηκῶσαι ροπή

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

- καὶ τίς γένοικ' ἔν τῆσδ' ἐτ' ἐχθίων τύχη;
λέξον τὸν' αὖ φῆς τήνδε συμφορὰν στρατῶ
440 ἔλθεῖν, κακῶν ῥέπουσαν εἰς τὰ μάσσονα.

Αἴτελοις

Περσῶν ὅσοι περ ἦσαν ἀκμαῖοι φύσιν
ψυχῇν τ' ἀριστοὶ κευθένειαν ἐκπερεῖς,
αὐτῶ τ' ἔνασσι πιστὸν ἐν πρώτοις ἀεὶ
τεθνάσκει αἰσγρῶ, οὐσκλεσσιτατὸ ποτμος

428 κελαινόν b: κελαινῆς MI b k

431 μηδ' αὖ b (?) κ μηδ' ἔν MI b k

444 ποτμος b: μωρω MI b k

PERSIANS

fish, and a mixture of shrieking and wailing filled the expanse of
the sea, until the dark face of night blotted it out. Our sufferings were
so multitudinous that I could not describe them fully to you if I were
to talk for ten days on end: you can be certain that never have so vast
a number of human beings perished in a single day.

queen

Aiai, what a great sea of troubles has burst upon the Persians and the
whole Eastern race!

messenger

Well, be sure of this: the tale of disaster is not yet even half told: such
a calamitous event has occurred, on top of what I have told you, that
it outweighs that in the scale fully twice over.

queen

What possible misfortune could be even more hateful than the one we
have heard of? Tell us what you say is this further disaster that has
come upon the army that weighs even more heavily in the scale of
evil.

messenger

All those Persians who were in their bodily prime, outstanding in
courage, notable for high birth, and who always showed the highest
degree of loyalty to the person of the King, have perished shamefully
by a most ignoble fate.

⁷¹ Tunny were caught in huge shoals, and, being a very large fish, had to be
killed by clubbing or spearing after being netted. In an unknown play of
Aeschylus (fr. 307) a man is described as having endured a savage beating
"without a groan, like a voiceless tunny-fish." Cf. Mairiaux, *Astronomie*
5.658-679, and see A. Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World from A to Z* (London,
2003) 333-7.

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

+ 45 οἵ γ' ὧς τάλαντα συμφορᾶς κεισῆς, φίλοι
ποιῶ μορῶ δὲ τοῦσδε φθῆς ἀλμύλονται

Αἴτωλός

νήσος τι, ἐστὶ πρόσθε Ἰαλμῶνα, τόπων
βαῖα, δυσορμος ναυσὶν, ἣν ὁ φύλοχος
Πᾶν ἐμβατεύει παντίας ἀκτῆς ἔτι
ἐνταῦθα πέμπει τοῦσδ', ὅπως, ὅτ' ἐκ νεῶν
σθαρῆντες ἐγθροίησιν ἐκπώσωται.
κτείνονεν εὐχειρατον Ἑλλήνων στρατόν,
φίλους δ' ὑπεκσιφίζονεν ἐναλίκων πορῶν,
κακῶς τὸ μέλλον ἱστορῶν· ὥς γάρ θεός
5 ναῶν ἔδωκε κύδος Ἑλλήνων μάχης,
αὐθημεροὶ φάρξαντες εὐχαλκτοὶ δέμας
ὅπλοισι ναῶν ἐξεθρώσκον, ἅμα δὲ
κυκλῶντο πᾶσαν νήσον, ὥστ' ἀμνηγεῖν
οἳ τραποιντο· πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ χερῶν
+ 61 πέτροισιν ἠράσσοντο, τοξυῆς τ' ἀπὸ
θώμηγος ἰοὶ προσπιτνοντες ὠλύσαν
τέλος δ' ἐφορμηθέντες εἰς ἑνὸς ῥόθου
παιουσι, κρεοκοποῦσι δυστήνων μέλη.

450 ὅτ' ἐκ Elmsley δταν vel iam. codd.

PERSIANS

queen

Ah, wretched me, my friends, this terrible catastrophe! By what kind
of death do you say they have perished?

messenger

There is an island in front of Salamis, small and offering no good
anchorage for ships, whose seashore is a haunt of Pan, lover of
dances. Xerxes sent these men there so that, when shipwrecked
enemies were trying to reach safety on the island, they could kill
the Greek warriors when they were an easy prey while rescuing their
own men from the straits of the sea. He was reading the future badly.
When god had given the triumph in the naval battle to the Greeks,
that same day they clad themselves in stout bronze armour, leaped off
their ships, and landed all around the island, so that the Persians had
no idea which way to turn. They were being heavily battered by
hand-thrown stones, and hit and killed by arrows shot from the
bowstring, until finally the Greeks charged them in a simultaneous
rush and struck them down, hacking the wretched men's limbs.

⁷² This island was Psyttaleia, on which, according to Herodotus (8.76.1–2), Xerxes stationed “many of the Persians” (Pausanias 1.36.2 gives the number as about 400) with the same objective as is stated here, they were killed to the last man by an Athenian hoplite force, led by Aristedes, which crossed over from Salamis while the naval battle was in progress (Herodotus 8.95). In Aeschylus’ treatment, on the other hand, the Greek attack on the island is made immediately after the naval battle, and by the same men who had fought it. Psyttaleia has been identified in modern times, sometimes with the island now officially so named (formerly Lipsokoutali) between Cynosura and the Peiraeus, sometimes with the island of Agios Georgios in the bay north of Salamis town.

⁷³ Pausanias loc.cit. noted that there were many roughly-carved wooden images of Pan on the island.

AESCHYLUS

ἕως ἀπάντων ἐξαιρέσθαι βίαν

- 465 Ξέρξης δ' ἀνθρωπῆεν κακῶν ὄραν βάθος
 ἔδραν γὰρ εἶχε παντός εὐαγῆ στρατοῦ,
 υψηλὸν ὄχθον ἄγχι πελάγας ὠλός
 ῥήϊας δὲ πέπλος κεννασκουσας λυγρῷ,
 πέδῳ παραγγέλλας ἄφαρ στρατευματι,
 470 ἦσ' ἀκόσμως ξὺν φυνῇ. τοιάνδε τοι
 πρὸς τῇ πάροιθε συμφορᾷ πάρα στένεν

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

- ὦ στυγρὴ δαίμων, ὥς ἄρ' ἐψευσας φρενῶν
 Πέρσας· πυκρὰν δὲ παῖς ἐμός τιμοριαν
 κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν πύρε, κοῦκ ἀπήρικεσαν
 475 οὓς πρόσθε Μαραθῶν βαρβάρων ἀπώλεσεν
 ὧν ἀντίποινα παῖς ἐμός πρόξεν ὁκοῶν
 τοσόνδε πλῆθος πημάτων ἐπέσπασεν
 σὺ δ' εἰπέ, γὰρ αἶ πεφευγασιν μόρον,
 ποῦ τάσδ' ἔλειπες, οἷσθα σημῆναι τορῶς.

ΛΗΤΕΛΟΣ

- 480 γὰρ δὲ ταῖσι τῶν λελειμμένων συδῆν
 κατ' οὖρον οὐκ εὐκοσμον αἶρονται φηγῆν
 στρατός δ' ὁ λαυτός ἐν τε Βοιωτῶν χθονι
 διαλλυθ', οἱ μὲν ἀμφὶ κρηναίων γένος
 δῆνη πονοῦντας, <οἱ δὲ
 >· οἱ δ' ἔκ' ἀσθματος κενού

470 τοι West τοι codd.

474 ἀπήρικεσαν b k ἀπηρικέσας(v) M I h

481 αἶρονται Elmsley αἰροῦνται M: αἰροῦνται vel sum. i b k

484 lacuna posited by Rieu. κενού Diggle: κεννοi codd.

PERSIANS

until they had extinguished the life of every one of them. Xerxes
 wailed aloud when he saw this depth of disaster, he was seated in
 plain sight of the whole army, on a high cliff close to the sea. He tore
 his robes, uttered a piercing cry of grief, and immediately gave an
 order to the land army, sending them off in helter-skelter flight. Such,
 I tell you, is the disaster you have to mourn, in addition to the
 previous one.

queen

O cruel divinity, how I see you have beguiled the minds of the
 Persians. My son has found his vengeance upon famous Athens to be
 a bitter one: the Eastern lives that Marathon had already destroyed
 were not enough for him. My son, in the belief that he was going to
 inflict punishment for that, has drawn upon himself this great
 multitude of sorrows. But tell me—those of the ships that escaped
 destruction—where did you leave them? Do you know enough to
 give us clear information?

messenger

The commanders of the remaining ships took to headlong, disorderly
 flight, running before the wind. The rest of the host⁷⁴ suffered
 continual losses: first of all in the land of the Boeotians, some of them
 prostrated by thirst when close to a sparkling spring. <Others by
 hunger>⁷⁵, while we survivors,

⁷⁴ i.e. the land army.

⁷⁵ Or possibly disease (cf. Herodotus 8.115.3), which is not, however,
 otherwise mentioned in this speech, whereas hunger and thirst make a natural pair
 and appear together in 489–491.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

- διεκπερῶμεν εἰς τὴν Φωκίαν γῆονα
 καὶ Δωριὸν αἶαν Μηλιάδ τε καὶ ποῖον σὺ
 Σπερχειῶν ἄρδαι πεδίοισιν εὐμενέει ποτὶ
 καντεῦθεν ἡμεῖς. ᾧ. Ἀχαιοὶ πεδὸν
 καὶ Θεσσαλῶν πόλιν ὑπεσπανισμένους
 491 βορᾶς ἐδεξάμεν· ἐνθα δὴ πλείστοι θάνατον
 δυνή τε λιμὸς τ' ἀμφοτέρω γάρ ἦν ἰδέε
 Μαγνητικὴν δὲ γαῖαν εἰς τὴν Μακεδονίαν
 χώραν ἀφικόμεσθ', ἐπ' Ἀξιῶ πόρον.
 Βολβῆς θ' ἔλειον δόνακα, Πάγγαιόν τε ὄρος.
 494 Ἥδωνίδ' αἶαν νυκτὶ δ' ἐν ταύτῃ θεὸς
 χειμῶν' ἔωρον ὥρσε, πήγνυσεν δὲ πᾶν
 ῥέεθρον ἀγνοῦ Στρυμονοῦ θεοῖς δὲ τις
 τὸ πρὶν νομίζων σὺδαμοῦ τότε πύχτετο
 λιταῖσι, γαῖαν οὐρανὸν τε προσκυκλῶν
 497 ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλὰ θεοκλυτῶν ἐπαύσατο
 στρατός, περὰ κρυσταλλοπήγα διὰ πόρον
 χάσσις μὲν ἡμῶν πρὶν σκεδασθῆναι θεοῦ
 ακτῖνας, ὠρωπῆθη σεσωμένοι κυρεῖ
 φλέγων γὰρ ἀνναῖς λαμπρὸς ἥλιος κύκλος
 505 μέσον πόρον βεῖκε θερμαινῶν φλόγι
 πυττον δ' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἠτύχχει δε τοῖς

489 πολέας Schaefer πολέας M b k (?) ΣΦ πολίσμ. 1 b k

505 ἠτύχχει (ω-) G C W. Schaefer: αἰτύχχει M γρ 1 k αἰτύχχεις b: αἰτύχης, b

out of breath and panting, passed on into the country of the Phocians and the land of Doris and came to the Malian Gulf, where the Spercheus waters the plain and provides drink bountifully. From there the soil of Achaia received us, and then the cities of Thessaly we were very short of food, and very many died in those parts from thirst and hunger—we had both of them. Then we reached the land of Magnesia and entered the country of the Macedonians, coming to the river Axios, ¹⁶ the reed-swamps of Lake Bolbe, ¹⁷ and Mount Pangaeum in the land of Edonia. ¹⁸ That night the god brought on an unseasonable cold snap, and froze the whole stream of holy Strymon, and those who had never before paid any regard to the gods now addressed them with prayers, making obeisance to earth and heaven. When the army had finished its many invocations of the gods, it began to cross the river now solid ice. Those of us who started across before the Sun-god scattered his rays got over safely, for the brilliant orb of the Sun, with his blazing beams, parted the ice in the middle of the channel, ¹⁹ heating it with his flames. The men fell one on top of another, and he was lucky, I tell you,

¹⁶ That is, Achaia Phthiotia, on the north shore of the Malian Gulf.

¹⁷ The north-eastern coastal region of Thessaly, dominated by Mount Ossa.

¹⁸ This river, which flows across Macedonia into the Thracian Gulf, marks approximately the point at which the Persian line of march turned from north to east.

¹⁹ This lake formed part of the boundary between the Chalcidic region to the south of it, with its Greek colonies, and the Macedonian kingdom.

²⁰ The mention of Mount Pangaeum is technically out of place, since it lies east of the Strymon, but probably all that is meant is that the army came in sight of the mountain.

²¹ lit. "caused the middle of the channel to move apart" (ὅστις is accusat. of separation).

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

ὅστις πῆλυστα πνεῦμ' ἀπέρρηξεν βίου
 ὅσοι δὲ λοιποὶ κῆρυχον σωτηρίας,
 Ὄρησιν περσασάντες, μολὼν πολλὰ πόνῳ
 510 ἤκουσεν ἐκφυγόντες, σὺ πολλοὶ τινες,
 ἐφ' ἐσπιούχον γαῖαν ὥς στέντεν πόλιν
 Περσῶν, ποθοῦσαν φιλόπτην ἥβην χθονός.
 ταῦτ' ἔστ' ἀληθὴ, πολλὰ δ' ἐκλείπω λέγων
 κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηψεν θεός

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ δυσπρόνυτε δαίμον, ὥς ἄγαν βαρὺς
 ποδοῖν ἐνθλου ταντι Περσικῷ γένει

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

οἶ γὰρ τάλαστα διαπεπραγμένου στρατοῦ
 ὦ νυκτός ὄψης ἐμφανῆς ἐνυπνίαν,
 ὥς κάρτα μοι σαφὲς εἰδηλώσας κακά
 520 ὑμεῖς δὲ φαυλὰς αὐτ' ἄγαν ἐκρυνατε
 ὁμῶς, ἐπειδὴ τῇδ' ἐκυρώσεν φάτις
 ὁμῶν θεοῖς μὲν πρῶτον εὐχασθαι θέλω
 ἔπειτα Γῇ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς δωρηματα
 ἤξω λαβοῦσα πελάνον ἐξ οὔκων ἐμῶν,
 525 ἐπιστάμαι μὲν ὥς ἐπ' ἐξευργασμένους,
 ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ λοιπὸν εἴ τι δὴ λῶτον πελοὶ
 ὑμᾶς δὲ χρὴ ἔτι τοῖσδε τοῖς πεπραγμένοις
 πιστοῖσι πιστὰ ζυμφερεῖν βουλεύματα
 καὶ καὶ ὦ, ἄνπερ δεῦρ' ἐμοῦ προσθεν μολῇ,

who broke off the breath of life soonest. Those who were left and had
 gained safety crossed Thrace and have now, after escaping with
 difficulty and with much hard toil, returned to the land of their hearth
 and home—but not many of them, so that the city of the Persians
 must grieve, longing vainly for the beloved youth of the land. All this
 is true, and there is much that I have omitted in my speech of the
 evils that a god has brought down upon the Persians.

[Exit.]

chorus

O you god who has caused such toil and grief, how very heavily you
 have leaped and trampled on the entire Persian race.

queen

Ah, wretched me! our army annihilated. O you clear dream-vision of
 the night, how very plainly you revealed these disasters to me—and
 you [turning to the chorus], in interpreting the dream, took it far too
 lightly! All the same, since this was your firm advice, I intend first
 to pray to the gods; then I will return, bringing from my palace a rich
 libation as a gift to Earth and the dead. I know that this is after the
 event, but it is in the hope that there may be something better to come
 in the future. For your part, it is your duty, in the light of these events,
 to offer trustworthy counsel to us who trust you, and if my son comes here
 before I

52. Cf. 216–220: it is noteworthy that no specific mention is here made of
 Darius (contrast 220–3 and 620–1).

AESCHYLUS

παρηγορεῖτε καὶ προπεμπετ εἰς ὄμον·
μή καὶ τι πρὸς κακίῃσι προσθῆται κακόν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ νῦν <ὄη> Περσῶν
τῶν μεγαλυχῶν καὶ πολυάνδρων
στρατιῶν ὀλέσας

535 ἄστυ τὸ Σουσαὶν ἢ Ὀ' Ἀγβατάνων
πένθει ὀνοφερῷ κατέκρυψας
πολλὰ δ' ἀπαλαῖς χερεὶ καλυπτρας
κατερεκόμεναι < >

διαμυδάλλουσ' ὀσφρύνει κόμπους

540 τέγγουσ' ὀλγούς μετέγγουσαι
αἱ δ' ἀβρόγασσι Περσίδες ἀνδρῶν
ποθέουσαι ἰδέσθαι ἀρτιζύγην
λέκτραν εὐνᾶς ἀβρογίτανας,

γλυδανῆς ἥβης τέρψιν, ἀφείσαι,

545 πενθοῦσι γόοις ἀκορεστοτάτοις·
καγὼ δὲ μόρον τῶν οἰχομένων
αἴρω ὀσφρύνει πολυπενθῇ

531 μή καὶ τι b k καὶ μή τι k μεμῖται M b

531 προσθῆται vel sum. k προσθῆται b. προσθῆται vel sum. M I b k

532 νῦν <ὄη> Scholefield. νῦν τῶν b k νῦν M I b k

538 lacuna posited by Dindorf, who suggested e.g. <μυτταρὲς οἰκτρας>

539 διαμυδάλλουσ' b k διαμυδάλλουσ' vel sum. M I b k Lf

PERSIANS

return, comfort him and escort him home, for fear that he may add
some further harm to the harm he has suffered.

[She leaves, by the way she came]

chorus

O Zeus the King, now, now by destroying
the army of the boastful
and populous Persian nation

you have covered the city of Susa and Agbatana
with a dark cloud of mourning

Many <mothers in a piteous plight>

are rending their veils with their delicate hands

and wetting the folds of their garments till they are
soaked through

with tears, as they take their share in the sorrow;

and the soft, wailing Persian women who yearn

to see the men they lately wedded,

abandoning the soft-covered beds they had slept in,

the delight of their pampered youth,

grieve with wailing that is utterly measurable

And I too shoulder the burden of the death of the

departed,

truly a theme for mourning far and wide

33 Probably to be taken as a guarded hint that she fears that Xerxes in his humiliation may commit suicide.

34 I translate the supplement suggested by Dindorf, something of the sort is necessary to identify the women being spoken of here in contrast with the widowed brides of 541-5, who are introduced (note on 5) as a group distinct from them.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

σπ α νῦν γὰρ προπῖσα δὴ στένει
 γαί' Ἀσιεῖ ἐκσενούμενα
 ἔρδῃ· μὲν ἄγαγεν, ποποί,
 ἔρδῃ· δ' ἀπώλεσεν, τοτοί,
 ἔρδῃ· δὲ πάντ' ἐπεσκεῖ δὴ σφρονέω·
 βαριδεῖ τε ποντιαί·
 τυττε Δαρεῖο, μὲν οὐτω
 τότε ἀβλήθη· ἐπὶν
 τοξάργος πολήταις,
 Σουσιῶος φηρὸς ἄκτωρ,

στ α πεζοὺς τε καὶ θαλάσσιον,
 ὁμοπτεροὶ κυανοπῖδες
 160 νᾶες μὲν ἄγαγον, ποποί,
 νᾶες δ' ἀπώλεσεν, τοτοί,
 νᾶες παναλῆθροισιν ἐμβολαῖς
 διαδ' Ἴωνας χεραῖ·
 τυτθὰ δ' ἐκφυγεῖν ἔνακτι'
 165 αὐτόν, ὥς ἀκονόμεν,

548 γὰρ κ' γὰρ σπ M I b k

549 δὲ Sommerstein μὲν / from 550' codd.

549 Ἀσιεῖ, Blomfield Ἀσιας, codd.

551 βαριδεῖ τε A k βαριδὲ ΣΓ βαριδὲσσι τε f βαριδῶσσι b k 54

553 ποντιαί· τεi sm M k ποντιαί I b k

554 τυττε b (?) κ' τυτοτε M I b k

556 πολήται· 2 πολήται M πολήται I b k

557 Σουσιῶος, Vassett b k Σουσιῶες M Σουσιῶας· τεi sm I b 5Φ 558 τε b

(?) κ' νῆρ κ' (?) κ' τε γὰρ M I b k

559 ὁμοπτεροὶ Brannock αὐ δ' ὁμοπτεροὶ (ὁμο· b) codd.

For now all, yes all, the emptied land
 of Asia groans:
 Xerxes took them—popoi'
 Xerxes lost them—totoi'
 Xerxes handled everything unwisely
 he and his sea-boats
 Why did Darius for his part
 do so little harm when he was the bowmaster
 who ruled over the citizenry,
 the dear leader of Susians?

Land-soldiers and seamen—
 the dart-faced, 86 equal-winged
 ships brought them—popoi!—
 ships destroyed them—totoi!—
 ships, with ruinous ramming,
 and driven by Ionian hands
 And the King himself,
 so we hear, barely escaped,

35 α: in comparison to Xerxes; compare Darius' own words at 780–1

86 The ship's 'face' is her prow, cf. the Homeric formula πρὸς
 Κρονόεντοπον—and, for the metaphor, the 'crimson-cheeked ships' of *Odyssey*
 11.124 and in reverse κροκόεντοπος 'fair-faced' used of Parthenopaeus in *Seven*
 433 and of Iphigenia in *Ag.* 256, possibly with allusion to the eyes so often
 painted on ships' bows.

8 The ship's 'wings' are her banks of oars, cf. *Odyssey* 22.225 which are,
 of course, equal on each side.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

ὀρηκτῆς ἅμ' πεδύρηι
 δυσχίμου' τε κελυθού.
 σφ β τοι δ' ἄρα πρωτομοροῖο σπύ,
 λησθέντες πρὸς ἀνάγκη, ἦέ
 570 αἰσται ἄμφι Κυχρεῖα, οἶ,
 ἔρραίνται στενέ και δασνά.
 ζοι βαρι δ' αμβοασον
 ουράνι ἄγῃ οἶ,
 τεκνέ δε δυσβαυκτον
 575 βοᾶτε καὶ αἰνῶνι αὐδῶν
 576 κναυπομενοι δ' ἄλ'ι δεινά, φεῦ,
 σκυλλονται πρὸς ἀναυδῶν, ἦέ,
 παιδων τᾶς ἀμιάντου, οἶ.
 πενθεῖ δ' ἄνδρα δόμος στερη-
 8 θεις, τοιαῖες δ' ἑπαιδες

567 δυσχίμους Arnaldus. δυσχεμῶνους vel sim. codd

568 -9 πρωτομοροῖο ἀνάγκης Blomfield. πρωτόμοροι ἐπ' αἰνῶνι vel sim. codd

571 ἔρραίνται (Page. ἔρραίνται b Σφ ἔρραίνται b k, ἔρραίνται l b, ἔρραίνται k, αἰραίνται k, ἔρραίνται b (?), ἔρραίνται b, ἔρα M) placed here by Hermann: in codd. it follows ἑπαιδες (580)

576 κναυπομενοι Bothe. γναυπομενοι M b k Σφ γναυπομενοι l b k

576 δεινά M b k δεινά vel sim. l b k Σφ

580 see on 571

over the wide plains
 and wintry tracks of Thrace

But those who were seized—*phau!*—
 by Necessity and made to die first—*ehhh-e' '—*
 now be smashed—*o-saah!*—
 around the shores of Cychreus' island. ³⁸ Groan
 and bite your lips, and utter a deep cry
 of towering woe—*o-saah!*—
 a terrible, long-drawn-out howl,
 a screaming voice of sorrow
 Terribly lacerated by the sea—*phen!*—
 they are being savaged by the voiceless children—*ehhhe!*—
 of the Undefined —*o-saah!*
 Bereaved houses mourn their men,
 and aged parents,

38 This is a long wail, a prolonged vowel [ɛ:] followed by a shorter, slightly closer vowel [ɛ]

39 Cychreus was a Salaminian hero ([Hesiod] fr. 226. Pherecydes fr. 60 Fowler. Diodorus Siculus 4.72.4–7, [Apollodorus], Library 3.12.7, Plutarch, Theseus 10.3, Solon 9.1). He was linked mythically to the family of Telamon and Ajax, being said to have died leaving a daughter who became either the mother or the wife of Telamon. During the battle of Salamis he appeared to the Athenians in the form of a serpent (Pausanias 1.36.1). Sophocles (fr. 579) refers to a “Cychrean rock” on the island.

90 The “Undefined” is the sea, which washes away all ritual pollution and can never become polluted itself, cf. Euripides, Iphigenia in Tauris 1193, and see R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford, 1983) 226–7. Its “children” are the fish.

AESCHYLUS

δαίμονι ἄγῃ, οἱ
δυρομένοι γέροντες
τὸ πᾶν ὅη κλύουσιν αἰ γὰρ

σπ γ τοι δ' ἀνὰ γᾶν Ἀσία δὴν
588 σὺκετι περσονομοῦνται,
σὺ δ' ἔτι δασμοφοροῦσι
δεσποσύνουσιν ἀνάγκαις,
οὐδ' εἰς γᾶν προπίνοντες
αἰχνοῦνται βασιλῆα
591 γὰρ διο. ὠλεσ' ἰσχνός

κπ γ οὐδ' ἐτι γ' ὥσσα βροτοῖσιν
ἐν φυλακαῖς μέλνεται γὰρ
λαὸς ἐλευθερὰ βαλεῖν
ὡς ἐλευθὴ ζυγὸν αἰκάς
595 αἰμαχθεῖσα δ' ἀρούρα
Ἀλάντος περικλυστὰ
ναυὸς ἔχει τὰ Περσέων

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

φίλοι, κακῶν μὲν οὐτι στρατεὶα κυρεῖ
ἐπιστάται βροτοῖσιν ὥς οἱαν κλύουσιν
601 κακῶν ἐπελθῇ, πάντα σεσημαντὸν οὐκ εἶ
οἱαν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὐροῇ, ἀποθνήσκει

588 σὺδ Heath's οὐδ' codd.
588 588 προ- k: προσ M I b k
589 αἰχνοῦνται Halm. ἀρῖνονται codd.
595 ἀρούρα Persson. ἀρούρα codd.
598 αἰμαχθεῖσα b στρατεία M I b k γ φ

PERSIANS

now childless—o-aah!—
lament their god-sent woes
as they hear the news that brings ultimate pain.

Not long now will those in the land of Asia
remain under Persian rule,
nor continue to pay tribute
under the compulsion of their lords,
nor fall on their faces to the ground
in awed obeisance; for the strength of the monarchy
has utterly vanished.

Nor do men any longer keep their tongue
under guard; for the people
have been let loose to speak with freedom,
now the yoke of military force no longer binds them
In its blood-soaked soul
the sea-washed isle of Ajax
holds the power of Persia

[The QUEEN returns, plainly dressed, on foot, and alone, herself
carrying offerings in a tray or basket.]

queen

My friends, anyone who has experience of misfortune knows that in
human affairs, when one is assailed by a surge of troubles, one is apt
to be afraid of anything, whereas when divine favour is flowing your
way, you tread

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

- τον αυτον αιεν ανεμον ουριεν τυχη,
 εμοι γαρ ἤδη πάντα μεν φόβου κλέα
 ἐν ὀμμασὶν τ' ἀνταῖα φαινεται θεῶν
 605 βοᾷ τ' ἐν ᾧσι κέλαδος οὐ παιώνιος
 τοια κακῶν ἐστληξας ἐκφοβεῖ φρενας,
 τοιγὰρ κέλευθον τήνδ' ἄντα τ' ὀχημάτων
 χλιδῆς τε τῆς κάροισιν ἐκ δόμον κῶλον
 ἔστειλα, παῖδοι πατρι τρεμμενέϊ, ῥοᾷ
 610 φέρουσ', ἄτερ νεκροῖσι μελικτήρια,
 βοός τ' ὄφ' ἄγνης λευκὸν εὐποτον γάλα,
 τῆς τ' ἀνθεμουργοῦ στάγμα, καμφοᾶς μέλι,
 λιβάσιν ὑδρηλαῖς παρθένου πηγῆς μετὰ
 ἀκήρατόν τε μητρος ἀγρίας ἄπο
 615 ποτόν, καλαῖδς ἀμπέλαι γένος τόδε
 τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐν φυλλοῖσι θαλλούσης βιον
 ξανθῆς ελαιας καρπος ευωδῆς παρα,
 ἄνθη τε πλεκτὰ, καμφόρου Γαῖας τέκνα
 ἄλλ', ὧ φίλοι, χοαῖσι ταῖσδε νερτέρων
 620 ὕμνους ἐπευφημεῖτε, τὸν τε δαίμονα
 Δαρεῖον ἀνακαλεῖσθε γαλότους δ' ἐγὼ
 τιμὰς προπέμψω τάσδε νερτεροῖς θεοῖς.

602 αἰὲν ἀνεμῶν Weil: αἰὲν δαίμον' vel una codd.

605 τ Weil δ codd.

to be sure that the breeze of good fortune will always continue to blow from astern. So for me now, everything is full of fear before my eyes there appear hostile visions from the gods, and in my ears there resounds a din that is not a song of cheer—such is the stunning effect of these misfortunes that terrifies my mind. That is why I have retraced my path, come back from my house without my carriage and without my former luxury, bringing propitiatory drink-offerings for the father of my child, such as serve to soothe the dead: white milk good to drink, from a pure cow the distilled product of the flower-worker gleaming honey, together with a libation of water from a virgin spring, a drink that has come unsullied from its wild-growing mother this juice of an old vine and also here are the sweet-smelling produce of the tree whose foliage never ceases to live and flourish, the blond olive-tree and a woven garland of flowers the children of Earth the bearer of all life. Now friends accompany these drink-offerings to the nether powers with auspicious songs and call up the divine Darius, meanwhile I will send these honours on their way to the gods below by letting the earth drink them up.

91 *ia* (probably) never yoked (cf. Bacchylides 11.105, 16.20)

92 *ia* of the bee.

93 Cf. Pindar, *Olympian* 11.13 and *Nemean* 1.17, where olive leaves are called "golden." The "sweet-smelling produce" of the tree will be its oil rather than its actual fruit.

94 As Hall has noted, every one of the six components of the offering is specified as coming from a feminine source—the cow, the bee (*μηλισσα*), the "virgin" spring, the "mother" vine, the olive-tree (*ἑλαια*), and Mother Earth.

AESCHYLUS

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βασίλειά γυναι, κρεσφόρ Πέρσαι,
 σὺ τε περὶ χροῖς θα μόνου ὑπὸ γῆ.

625 ἡμεῖς θ' ὕμνοις αἰτησόμεθα
 φθιμένας πομπῶν
 εὐφροιά, εἶναι κατὰ γαίαν,
 ἀλλὰ γθονοὶ σαιμονες ἄννοι,
 Γῆ τε καὶ Ἑρμῇ βασύχ' ἔνερων
 περψαὶ ἐνέρθαι ψυχῇ εἰ φῶς
 εἰ γὰρ τι κακῶν ἄκος οἶδε τίλον
 μόνος ἂν θνητῶν πέραν εἴποι

στρ α ἦ ῥ' αἰεὶ μοι μακαρίτας ποδαίμων βασιλεὺς
 βαρβαρα σαφηνῇ
 ἔντος τὰ παναῖοι αἰανῇ
 δυσθροα βασίματα,
 πανταλάν αἰχῇ
 διαβοῶσιν
 νερθεῖ ἄρα κλύει μου

στρ β ἀλλὰ σὺ μοι, Γῆ τε καὶ ἄλλοι γθονοὶ σαιμονες,

PERSIANS

chorus

Royal lady, first in honour among the Persians,
 while you send the drink-offerings down to earth's inner
 chambers,

we in song will beseech
 those with power to send up the dead
 to be kind to us in their home beneath the earth

[During the rest of this chant and song by the CHORUS the QUEEN is
 pouring the drink-offerings at Darius' tomb with appropriate ritual
 actions.]

Now you holy drummers of the underworld
 Earth and Hermes and you King of the Shades,
 send that soul up from below into the light,
 for if he knows any further remedy for our troubles
 he alone of mortals will tell us how to end them

Does he hearken to me—the blessed King, equal to a
 god—

as I send forth clearly in Eastern speech
 my variegated, grief-laden
 cries that tell of woe?

Let me try to reach him, voicing loudly
 our wretched sufferings:
 does he hear me from below?

I pray you, Earth and you other rulers of the
 underworld,

95 Hades, Aidoneus, Pluto (who will be addressed by name at 650).

96 A slightly illogical statement, resulting from an attempt to say two things
 at once: (1) Darius, unlike any living mortal, may have the knowledge that will
 enable him to tell the Persians the right course to follow, (2) if he does have such
 knowledge, Darius will surely be willing to impart it.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

δαίμονα μέγαν/ῃ
 ἵεντ' ἀνέσσαι ἐκ ὄμοιο
 Περσῶν Σουσιγενῆ θεοῖ
 πεμπετε δ' αὖτις,
 οἷον οὐλοῖ
 Πέρσιν πῖ ἐκάλυψε

578 β ἥ σιν οὖς αἴτηρ, οὐ οὖς ὄχθος
 φύλα νάρ κεκρυμμένῃ

650 Αἰδωνεύς δ' ἀνατομῶς ἀνείη, Αἰδωνεύς,
 θεῖον ἀνάκτορα Δαριάνη

ἀν β σῦτε γάρ ἀνδρας ποτ' ἀπώλλου
 πολεμοφθοροισι αἰαί

655 θεομήστορ δ' ἐκυκλήσκειτο Πέρσας, θεομήστορ
 δ' ἔσκεν, ἀπεί στρατὸν τ' εὖ ἐποδῶκετ' ἡ

642 μεγαυχή k μεγαλειυχή val uem. M l b k

647 οἷος ὄχθος b. ἡ φύλος ὄχθος M l b k

650 ἀνείη (uic) M. ὅς σὺν M. k γρ EI ἀνείη l b ΣΦ. ἀνείη k ἀνείη b ἀνείη b

k

651 (at start of line) Δαρσίον codd. del. Dindorf

651 θεῖον Schütz. οἷον codd. οἷον uem

651 ἀνάκτορα Δαριάνη Dindorf. ἀνάκτορα Δαρσίον val uem. codd

656 εὖ (om. Macb.) ἐποδῶκετ' (ἐπεδῶκετ' Mac, ἐπεδῶκετ' b k (?) codd.

Σ(ι)Φ. ὑπὸ τὸν αὐτοῦ ποδὸς ἤνωκετ' ΣM Σ(ι)Φ. εὖ ποδῶκετ' Dindorf. ἡποδῶκετ' uem

consent to this proud divine being
 emerging from your abode—
 the Persians' god, born in Susa—
 and send him up here,
 one like no other
 whom Persian soil has ever covered

Truly we love the man, we love the mound;
 for it conceals a man of lovable character
 May Aidoneus release him and send him up, Aidoneus—
 the godlike ruler Darian! Ehhh-e!

For he was never one to lose many men
 by disastrous slaughters in war
 the Persians called him "divine counsellor", and a divine
 Counselor
 he was, for he guided the people well. Ehhh-e!

[During the next two stanzas the CHORUS are on their knees, beating
 and furrowing the ground with their hands.]

97 Since this form of the king's name is no closer than the regular Greek
 form Δαρσίος to the Persian Dārayavahū, it may be based on the form used in
 some third language (of Asia Minor?); at any rate Aeschylus, in using it here and
 below (663, 671), is clearly seeking to give the invocation a particularly exotic air.

98 The verb is corrupt beyond confident restoration (and the scholar's
 paraphrase, "drive [as a chariot] under his own foot", may be only an attempt
 to wring sense out of the transmitted word), but this must be approximately its
 meaning.

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

σπ 7 βαλλήν, ἀρχαῖος βαλλήν, ἔθι, ἱκοῦ
 ἔλθ' ἐκ' ἄκρον κόρυμβον ὄχθου,
 κροκόβαπτον ποδός εὐμαρην ἄεψαν,
 βασύλειον τηρὰ φανέρον πικρυσκῶν
 4 βάσκει, πατέρ ἄκαυτε Δαρίαν' οἶ

ἀν 7 ὅπως αἰνὰ τε κλυτὴς νῆα τ' ἄχῃ
 δεσποτα, δέσποτ', ὦ φάνηθι.
 Στῆγνα γάρ τις ἐπ' ἀγλὺς πεπότηται
 νεολαία γάρ ἤδη κατὰ πᾶσ' ὄλωσεν
 βάσκει, πατέρ ἄκαυτε Δαρίαν' οἶ.

ἰωδ αἰαὶ αἰαὶ
 ὦ πολυκλαυτε φύλοισι θανάων,
 τι τόδε, τι τόδε, θυνάτα, θυνάτα,
 ἔπερι τῇ σῇ δίδυμα διαγόμεν' ἀμάρτια;
 πᾶσαι γὰρ γὰ τῇδ' ἐξέφθινται τρισκαλμοὶ
 680 νᾶες ἄναιες ἄναιες

665 αἰνὰ Vikesos (γ αἰνα Pzaw): καινὰ codd.

667 δεσποτ: ἰδ Enger δεσποτατ codd.

675 τι τοῦδε τι τοῦδε West τι τοῦδε codd.

676 περὶ τῇ σῇ vel αἰα codd. (περὶ τῇ σῇ Mac): παρῖα Bothe. παρῖα Bothe.

West

677 διαγόμεν G C V Schneider διαγόμεν M δα διαγοι M δα τοιθ τρι

διαγόμεν ο ο οπ b k l b k

678 γὰρ γὰ Dindorf γὰ vel αἰα codd.

Ballen, our ancient ballên,⁹⁹ come, come to us!
 Come to the very summit of your tomb-mound,
 Lifting up your feet in their saffron-dyed slippers,
 revealing the peak of your royal hat
 come hither, father Darian who never harmed us—oi —

so that you may hear of terrible recent sorrows
 Master, master, show yourself!
 A cloud of Stygian gloom hovers over us,
 for now all of our young men have perished!
 Come hither, father Darian who never harmed us—oi

[The CHORUS rise to their feet.]

Aiai, aiai!

You whose death was so much bewailed by those who
 loved you,

our lord, our lord, what does it mean, what does it mean,
 this ever-to-be-lamented twin failure that has befallen us?
 All the triple-oared ships this land possessed have
 vanished away—

they are ships no more, ships no more!

[The GHOST OF DARIUS appears above his tomb.]

99 This appears to be a Phrygian word for “king” ([Plutarch], On Rivers 12.3–4); in Sophocles’ *Shepherdess*, whose scene was Troy, the chorus use it in addressing (presumably) Priam (Sophocles fr. 51.5).

100 The Persian noble’s headgear (τιμὰ or κρυβάτις) was a soft felt hat; the King wore a taller, stiffened, peaked version.

101 The loss of the fleet and of the land army, cf. 719–720, 728.

102 lit. “ships with three <sets of thole-pins>”, i.e. triremes.

AESCHYLUS

ΕΙΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ὦ πιστὰ πιστῶν ἤλικός θ' ἦβηκ' ἐμῆς,
 Πέρσαι γεραιοί, τίνα πόλλ' ἀνείπονον,
 στένει, κέκοκται, καὶ χαράσσεται πέσον
 λειψασαν δ' ἄκοιτον τὴν ἐμὴν τάφου πέλας
 686 ταρβῶ χοῶς δὲ πρηνεμένης ἐδεξάμην
 ὑμεῖς δὲ θρηνεῖτ' ἐγγυς ἐστῶτες τάφου,
 καὶ ψυχαναγωγὸς ὀρθιάζετε, νοοῖς
 οὐκ ἐντὸς καλεῖσθ' ἐμ' ἔστι δ' οὐκ εὐεξοδόν,
 ἄλλως τε πάντως χοὶ κατὰ χρόνον θεοὶ
 687 λαβεῖν ἀμείνους εἰσιν ἢ μεθύνει
 ὅμως δ' ἐκείνοισι ἐνδυναστεύσας ἐγὼ
 ἦκα. τάχυνε δ' ὥς ἀμεμπτος ὦ χρόνου
 τί ἐστι Πέρσαις νεοχρὸν ἐμβριθὲς κακόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

688 σέβομαι μὲν προσιδεσθαι,
 689 σέβομαι δ' ἀντία λῆξαι
 σέθεν αρχαῖος περὶ ταρβει

ΕΙΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ κάτωθεν ἦλθον σοῖς γόοις πεπεισμένος,
 μή τι μακιστῆρα μῦθον, ἀλλὰ σύντομον λεγὼν
 εὐτε καὶ περαινέ πάντα, τὴν ἐμὴν παῖδ' ἀμθεις.

687 ὀρθιάζοντες κ.κ. ὀρθιῶντες κ. ὀρθιῶντες M I b k

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

Trusted of the trusted, contemporaries of my youth, elders of Persia,
 what distress is our state suffering? The earth is groaning, having
 been beaten and furrowed, the sight of my wife close by my tomb
 causes me fear, though I have gladly accepted her drink-offerings,
 and you are standing round my tomb singing songs of grief, lifting up
 your voices in wailing to summon my spirit, and calling on me in
 pitious tones. It has not been easy to gain egress apart from anything
 else: the gods below the earth are better at taking people in than at
 letting them go: nevertheless, holding as I do a position of power
 among them, I have come here. But be speedy, so that I am not
 blamed for the time I have taken: what is the heavy recent disaster
 that has happened to Persia?

[The CHORUS prostrate themselves.]

chorus

I am too awed to look upon you,
 I am too awed to speak before you,
 because I feared you of old.

ghost of darius

But since it is your laments that have induced me to come up from
 below: speak now, not in long-winded words but putting it concisely
 and covering everything, setting your awe of me aside.

103 Presumably we are meant to understand that the presence at the tomb of
 the Queen and the Elders suggests to Darius that whatever disaster has happened
 involves both the state as a whole and one or more of his own children.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἴντ' ὀνομαίμην χαρισασθαι,
 701 ὀνομαίμ' ἄντια φάσθαι,
 λέξαι, εὐσλέκτα φιλοισιν

ΕΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δεοῖ παλαιὸν σοὶ φρενῶν πεφιστάται,
 τῶν ἐμῶν λέκτρων γεραίᾳ ξυννομ', εὐγενὲς δάμαρ,
 705 κλυτομάτην λήξασα τῶνδε καὶ γόνυ σαφές τι μοι
 λέξον ἀνθρώπειά δ' ἂν τοι πῆματ' ἂν τυχοί
 βροτοῖς
 πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ θαλάσσης, πολλὰ δ' ἐκ χέρσου
 κακὰ
 γίνεται θνητοῖς, ὃ μάσσων βίωτος ἦν ταθὴ προσκο

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ὦ βροτῶν πάντων ὑπερσχὼν δόβον ευτυχεῖ πότμω,
 710 ὥς ἕως τ' ἔλευσας αὐγὰς ἡλίου ζηλωτος ὢν
 βίωτον εὐχαιῶνα Πέρσαις ὥς θεὸς δαίνας,
 νῦν τέ σε ζηλῶ θανόντα πρὶν κακῶν ἰδεῖν βάθος,
 πάντα γάρ, Δαρεῖ', ἀκουσὴ μῦθον ἐν βραχέϊ χρόνῳ
 διαπεπόρθηται τὰ Περσῶν πράγματα, ὥς εὐτεῖν
 ἔπος

ΕΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

715 τινι τροπῇ; λοιμοῦ τις ἦλθε σιγητὸς, ἢ στασις;
 πόλει,

700-701 ὀνομαίμ' (and b m 700) ὀνομαίμ' MI b k

704 δάμαρ ἰ. γυναίκα MI b k

709 πότμω Iac b k. ποτμῶν M Ipc b k

714 εὐτεῖν ἕως k. ἕως εὐτεῖν MI b

chorus (rising again to their feet)

I am afraid to gratify your wish,
 I am afraid to speak plainly,
 saying things that are hard to say to a friend

ghost of darius

Well, since your old fear is standing guard over your mind—[turning
 to the queen, who seems wrapped up in her grief] I ask you, my noble
 wife, old companion of my bed, to end this crying and wailing and
 speak plainly to me. Human beings, you know, are bound to
 experience human sufferings: there are many evils that befall mortals,
 both by sea and by land, if their life is prolonged to a great span.

queen

You whose fortunate fate surpassed all mortals in bliss, how enviable
 you were when you saw the light of the sun and led a life of such
 happiness that Persians looked on you as a god. And now too I envy
 you, because you died before seeing the depths of our present
 suffering. It will take you a little time, Darius, to hear the whole
 story: to all intents and purposes, the fortunes of Persia are utterly
 ruined.

ghost of darius

How has it happened? Has our state been stricken by a virulent
 plague,¹⁰⁴ or by civil strife?

104 Probably a reminiscence of Hesiod, Works and Days 101 ("The earth is
 full of evils, and so is the sea.")

105 lit. "a thunderbolt of plague"

AESCHYLUS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

οὐραμῶν, ἀλλ' ἅμα Ἀθῆνα πᾶς κατασθάρται
στρατοῦ.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

τις δ' ἐμῶν ἐκείσε παιδῶν ἐστρατηλάτει, φράσον.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

θούριος Ξέρξης, κενύσαι πάσαν ἡπειρὸν πλάη.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

πέζος ἢ ναυτὸς δὲ πείραν τινὸς ἐμῶραι ἐν θαλάσῃ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

720 ἀμφότερα θυλοῦν μέτωπον ἦν θυοῖν
στρατεύματος.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

πῶς δὲ καὶ στρατοῦ τοσοῦδε πέζοι, ἦν υἱοὶ περὶ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

μηχαναῖς εἰσέβηεν Ἑλλήν, κορθῶν, ὥστε ἔχεν
πόρον.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

καὶ τοῦ εἰσπραξέν, ὥστε Βόσπορον κλῆσαι μέγα.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ὧδ' ἔχει γυναικὸς δὲ τοῦ τῶν δαιμόνων ζυγηγαστο.

720 στρατεύματιον k. στρατηματιον (-αιν b) M 1 b.

PERSIANS

queen

Not at all: what has happened is that our entire army has been
destroyed in the region of Athens.

ghost of darius

And tell me: which of my sons led the army there?

queen

The bold Xerxes: he emptied the whole expanse of the continent.

ghost of darius

And did the wretched boy make this foolish attempt by land or by
sea?

queen

Both: it was a double front composed of two forces.

ghost of darius

And how did a land army of that size manage to get across the water?

queen

He contrived means to take the strait of Helle: so as to create a
pathway.

ghost of darius

He actually carried that out: so as to close up the mighty
Bosporus?

queen

It is true. Some divinity must have touched his wife.

106 In poetry, the Hellespont is sometimes referred to as the Bosporus (746
Sophocles, *Ajax* 854; Sophocles fr. 503), a name which properly, then as now,
belonged to the other strait separating Europe from Asia, at
Byzantium/Constantinople, some 150 miles (240 km) to the north-east.

ÆSCHYLUS

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

φεῦ, μέγας τις ἦλθε δαίμων, ὥστε μὴ φρονεῖν
καὶ ὦ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ὥς ἰδεῖν τέλος πάρεστιν οἷον ἤνυσεν κικλόν

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

καὶ τί δὴ πράξασιν αὐτοῖς ὅδ' ἐπιστενάζετε.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ναυτικός στρατός κακωθείς πεζὸν ὥλεσε στρατόν

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ὥδε παμπήδην δὲ λαός πᾶς κατέσθαρται ὁρι.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

730 πρὸς τᾷδ' ὅς Σουσων μὲν ἄστυ πᾶν κενανδρίσθ
στεναι—

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ὦ πόποι κενήης ἀρωγῆς κατεκυρίας στρατοῦ

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

Βακτριαν δ' ἔρρει πανώλης θήμος, οὐδὲ τέ
†γεραν†

732 γεραν codd. κατὰ Gouppert perh. ἀπρᾶ (cf. 799 ἀπρᾶν Wecklein)

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

Ah, it was a powerful divinity that came upon him, to put him out of
his right mind!

queen

Yes, one can see by the outcome what a disaster he managed to
create

ghost of darius

And what in fact was the outcome for them over which you are
grieving so?

queen

The naval force was savaged and that doomed the land army to
destruction

ghost of darius

Was the whole host so utterly and completely destroyed by the
spear?

queen

So that on account of this the whole city of Susa is grieving because
it is empty of men—

ghost of darius

Ah me, our army, our valiant aid and protector!

queen

And the whole community of the Bactrians is perished and gone,
with not one survivor

107 Apparently Darius mistakenly supposes that the land army was
destroyed in battle

108 This must have been the approximate sense; the transmitted reading,
which means "nor <is there a single old man>," is absurd, since it was the young
who perished in the war

ÆSCHYLUS

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ὦ μέλκος, οἶαν ἄρ' ἦβην θυμιάχων ἀπώλεσεν.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

μονάδα δὲ Ξερξην ἔρημόν φασιν σὺ πολλῶν μέτα—

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

735 πῶς τε δὴ καὶ ποῖ τελευτᾶν, ἔστι τις σσπηρια,

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ἀσμενον μολεῖν γέφυραν γὰρ δυοῖν ζευκτηριαν

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

καὶ πρὸς ἡπειρὸν σεσέσθαι τῇ δὲ τοῦτ' ἐτηγμῶν

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

ναί, λόγος κρατεῖ σαφηνὴς τοῦτό γ' οὐκ ἐν
στάσις

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

φεῦ, τάχειά γ' ἦλθε χρησμῶν πρόβης, εἰς δὲ παῖδ'
ἐμὸν

740 Ζεὺς ἀπέσκηπεν τελευτὴν θεσφάτων· ἐγὼ δὲ που
διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου τὰδ' ἠγχοῦν ἐκτελευτήσεν
θεοῦς

ἀλλ', ὅταν σπευδῇ τις αὐτός, χω θεὸς συναίτεται
νῦν κακῶν εὐκαὶ πρῆτη πᾶσι πωρήσθαι σῶσι.

745 πᾶς δ' ἐμός τὰδ' οὐ κατείδας ἦνυσεν νεῶ θρόσει,
ὅστις Ἑλλησπόντον ἱερὸν δοῦλον ἄς δεσπομασιν
ἤλπισε σγησιν βρόντα, Βοσπορον ποῖον θεοῦ.

736 γαῖν Askew, cf. ΣΜος ξενησιν Ἀσπιν καὶ Εὐραπην ἐν codd.

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

Poor fellow, what young manhood of our allies he has lost!

queen

And Xerxes himself, they say, alone and forlorn, with only a few
men—

ghost of darius

How did he finish up, and where? Is there any chance of his being
safe?

queen

—has arrived, to his relief, at the bridge that joins the two lands
together.

ghost of darius

And has come safe back to our continent? Is that really true?

queen

Yes, that is the prevalent and definite report: there is no dispute about
it.

ghost of darius

Ah, how swiftly the oracles have come true! Zeus has launched the
fulfilment of the prophecies against my son. I used to think
confidently, "I suppose the gods will fulfil them in some distant
future—but when a man is in a hurry himself, the god will lend him a
hand. Now, it seems, there has been discovered a fountain of sorrow
for all who are dear to me—and it is my son, by his youthful
rashness, who has achieved this without knowing what he was doing.
He thought he could stop the flow of the Hellespont, the divine
stream¹⁰⁹ of the Bosphorus, by putting chains on it, as if

109 lit. "stream of a god" the god being Poseidon (750).

καὶ πόρον μετ' ἑρμῆϊ· καὶ περὶ αἰὲρ στυγρὴν αἰτοῖ
 περιβαλὼν ποταμὸν καὶ κυθὸν ἤνυσεν ποταμὸν στρατῷ
 θνητῶν δὲ θεῶν τε πάντων ὄψε', σὺν συμβουλῇ,
 750 καὶ Ποσειδῶνος κρατήσεν πᾶς τὰδ' αὖ νόσος
 φρενῶν
 εἶχε παῖδ' ἐμὸν, δέδουκε μὴ πολὺς πλούτου πονος
 σῆμας ἀντραπείας γένηται τοῦ φθόσσαντος ἀρπαγῇ.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

πάντ' τοι κακοῖς ὁμῶν ἀνδράσιν διδάσκειται
 θουριος Ξέρξης, λένουσι δ' ὥς σὺ μὲν μέγαν
 τέκνοισι
 755 πλοῦτον ἐκτίσῃ σὺν αἰγμῇ, τὸν δ' ἀνενδρίας ὑπο
 ἔνδον αἰγμάζειν, πατρῶον δ' ὄλβον οὐδεν ἀυξάνειν
 τοιάδ' ἐξ ἀνδρῶν ἐνείδῃ πολλῆς κλυτὰν κυσίν
 τήνδ' ἐβούλευσεν κέλυσθον καὶ στρατεύμ' ἐφ'
 Ἑλλάδα.

ΕΙΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

τοιγὰρ σφεν ἔργον ἐστὶν ἐξειργασμένον
 760 μέγιστον, αἰεμνηστον, οἷον οὐδέπω
 τοῦ αἰσῦ Σουσαῖα ἐξέκρινεσθαι εἰμπεστον
 ἐξ οὔτε τιμὴν Ζεὺς ἀναξ τήνδ' ὥπασεν,
 ἐν' ἀνδρ' ὥπασθαι Ἀσιᾶς μηλοτροφου
 ταυγῆν ἔχοντα σκῆπτρον ευθυντηριον

749 δὲ θεῶν τε Doederlein θεῶν τε k. θεῶν δὲ M I b k.
 752 ἀντραπείας Zakas, cf. 163 ἀνθρωπείας codd.
 753 τοι Dindorf τοῖς codd.
 761 ἐξέκρινεσθαι εἰμπεστον Passer ἐξέκρινεσθαι τισῶν codd.

it were a slave, he altered the nature of its passage, ' put hammered
 fetters upon it, and created a great pathway for a great army. He
 thought, ill-counselled as he was, that he, a mortal, could lord it over
 all the gods and over Poseidon. Surely this was a mental disease that
 had my son in its grip! I am afraid that the great wealth I gained by
 my labours may be overturned and become the booty of the first
 comer

queen

The rash Xerxes. I should tell you, was taught this way of thinking by
 associating with wicked men. They said that whereas you had
 acquired great wealth for your children by warfare, he, from
 unmanliness, was being a stay-at-home warrior and doing nothing to
 increase the riches he had inherited. It was because he had heard
 taunts like that over and over again, from these wicked men, that he
 planned this military expedition against Greece

ghost of Darius

And so he has completed an immense, never-to-be-forgotten
 achievement: nothing else that has befallen this city of Susa has ever
 emptied it like this: since Lord Zeus first granted us this honour, that
 one man should be supreme over the whole of sheep-rearing Asia,
 wielding the scepter

110 i.e. he stopped up a sea-passag and created a land-passag instead

AESCHYLUS

Μῆδοκ γὰρ ἦν ὁ πρῶτος ἡγεμὼν στρατοῦ,
 ἄλλος δ' ἐκείνου παῖς τὸδ' ἔργον ἥρπασεν
 τρίτος δ' ἅπ' αὐτοῦ Κύρος, εὐδοκίμων ἀνὴρ,
 ἀρετὰς ἔθηκε πᾶσιν εἰρηνητὴ φύσει·
 φρένες γὰρ αὐτοῦ θυμὸν φαειοστροφον
 Λυδῶν δὲ λαὸν καὶ Φρυγῶν ἐκτῆσατο
 Ἰωνίαν τε πᾶσαν ἤλασεν βία·
 θεὸς γὰρ οὐκ ἤρθηρεν, ὥς εὐφραν ἔφυ·
 Κυροῦ δὲ παῖς τέταρτος πύθονε στρατὸν
 πέμπτος δὲ Μάρβος ἤρξεν, αἰσχύνῃ πάτερ·
 θρόνοισι τ' ἀρχαίοισι τὸν δὲ σὺν δόλῳ
 Ἀρταφρένης ἔκτεινεν ἐσθλὸς ἐν δόμοις
 ξυν ἀνδράσιν φύλοισιν, οἷς τὸδ' ἦν χρεὸς,
 κἀνὼ πάλαι δ' ἐκυρσα τοῦπερ ἤθελον

767 transposed by Page to follow 769

773 πύθονε Bousset, ἤθονε Mac k; ἴθονε Mpc I b k

(771) ἔκτος δὲ Μάρβος (M Ipc b. Μαρσος, Μαρσος, Μαρσωνος lac b k)

εὐδοκίμος (δ add k, ε' add b) Ἀρταφρένης codd. del Schutz

PERSIANS

of directive authority Medus was the first leader of our host, and his son also achieved this position. The third ruler in the succession from him was Cyrus, a man blessed by the gods, who gave peace to all those he cared for, since his intelligence was in control of his fighting spirit, he gained mastery over the peoples of Lydia and Phrygia, and overran all of Ionia by force. God did not hate him, because he was wise. The son of Cyrus was the fourth to direct the host. The fifth ruler was Mardus – a disgrace to his country and to his ancient throne. He was killed in his palace by means of a crafty plot, by the admirable Artaphrenes – together with some friends who took on this duty and with my self and I gained by chance the lot I

111 Probably to be taken as the (mythical) aponymous founder of the kingdom of the Medes (cf. on 236). Later tragedians spoke of a Medus, son of Medes and Aegeus, as the ancestor of the Median people (Diodorus Siculus 4.55.5–56.1, [Apollodorus], Library 1.9.28). Alternatively Μῆδος may mean ‘a Mede’ in which case the reference will be to Cyaxares (reigned ca 625–585), the first Median king to extend his rule into Asia Minor; in that case his son will be Astyages, the maternal grandfather of Cyrus, eventually deposed by him.

112 lit. ‘turned the helm of’

113 This was Cambyses (reigned 529–522), the conqueror of Egypt

114 In Herodotus (3.61–79) he is called Smerdis and said to be a usurper impersonating Cambyses’ brother of the same name in Persian Bardiya – so too Darius himself in the Behistun inscription, 𐎧𐎠𐎼𐎹𐎡𐎹 translated in M. Brosius, *The Persian Empire from Cyrus II to Artaxerxes I* (London, 2000) 23–24, 27–40) except that he calls the usurper Gaumata.

115 Herodotus (3.70ff) calls this man Intaphrenes, which is considerably closer to the Persian Viṇdafarnā; evidently Aeschylus has confused him with a man much better known to Greeks, Darius’ brother, the governor of Sardinia at the time of the Ionian revolt (Herodotus 5.25.1 etc.), whose son of the same name had been joint commander of the Persian forces at Marathon.

AESCHYLUS

- ⁷⁸ κάλεσιρά τευσα πολλὰ συν πολλῶ στρατῶ.
 ἀλλ' οὐ κακῶν τοσόνδε προσέβαλον πόλει
 ἑρξής δ' ἐμός καίς νέος ἔτ' ὄν νεα φρονεῖ,
 κοῦ μνημονεύει τῶς ἐμῆς ἐπιστολῆς.
 εὖ γὰρ σαφῶς τὸδ' ἴσσι', ἐμοὶ ξυνήλικες
⁷⁹ ἅπαντες ἡμεῖς, οἳ κράτη τῶδ' ἔσχομεν
 οὐκ ἂν φανεῖμεν πῆματ' ἔρξαντες τόσα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί σὺν, ὄναξ Δαρεῖς; ποῖ καταστρέψεις
 λόγων τελευτήν; πῶς ἂν ἐκ τούτων ἐπὶ
 πρόσσοιμεν ὡς ἄριστα Περσικὸς λαὸς.

ΕΙΔΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ¹

- ⁹¹ εἴ μὴ στρατεύσῃς εἰς τὸν Ἑλλήνων τόπον,
 μηδ' εἰ στρατεύμα πλείον ἢ τὸ Μηδυσὸν
 αὐτὴ γὰρ ἢ γῆ συμμάχος κενοῖς πέλει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς τοῦτ' ἔλεξας, τινι τρόπῳ δε συμμαχεῖ;

¹82 ἔτ' ὄν Martin: ἔον MI ὄν b k

PERSIANS

desired.¹¹⁶ And I invaded many lands with great armies, but I never inflicted on my state such harm as this. My son Xerxes, though, is still a young man, thinking young man's thoughts, and he has not kept my instructions in mind. I tell you this plainly, my old contemporaries take all of us together who have held this kingship, and we will not be found to have caused this much suffering.

chorus

What then, lord Darius? To what conclusion do your words lead? After this how can we, the Persian people, get the best possible outcome for the future?

ghost of darius

By not invading the land of the Greeks, not even with a Median army still greater than before! Their country itself fights as their ally.

chorus

How do you mean? In what way does it fight as their ally?

116 i.e. we (either all the conspirators—so in effect Herodotus 3.84–88—or Darius and Artaphernes alone) drew lots for the kingship, and I won. If the additional line 75 present in the ms. is retained in the text the meaning will be “He was killed . . . by the admirable Artaphernes together with some friends who took on this duty: the sixth <to rule> was Maraphis, the seventh Artaphernes and myself, and I gained by chance the lot I desired.” The genuineness of the line is defended by M. L. West in M. A. Flower and M. Toher ed. *Georgica: Studies in Honour of George Cawkwell* (London, 1991) 184–8, but the text in this form gives no indication of who Maraphis was, leaves the nature of the connection between Artaphernes and Darius completely undefined, makes Darius claim no credit at all for the assassination of the “disgrace” Mardos, and fails to explain why Artaphernes, having masterminded Mardos’ death, did not succeed immediately himself. See W. Kraus, *Wiener Studien* 104 (1991) 90–91. The interpolated line may derive ultimately from a marginal variant (Μαράπης for Μαρόδος) on 774, itself based on an apparent statement by the historian Hellanicus (FGH 4 F 180, cited in a scholium on 770) that Cambyses’ brothers were named Maraphis and Merphus, if the variant was written at the bottom of a column, below line 777, it could have been mistaken for a remnant of a lost line, and a “restoration” of that line cobbled together.

AESCHYLUS

ΕΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

κτείνουσα ῥιμῇ τοῦ· ὑπερπολλοῦς ἄγαν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εὐστατῇ τοι λεκτὸν ἀροῦμεν στάλον.

ΕΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὁ μείνας νῦν ἐν Ἑλλάδος τόποις
στρατὸς κυρήσει νοστίμου σπητρίας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς εὔτας, οὐ γὰρ πᾶν στράτευμα βαρβάρων
περὶ τὸν Ἑλλῆς πορθμὸν Ευρώπης ἄπο,

ΕΛΩΛΟΝ ΔΑΡΕΙΟΥ

- 800 παῦροι γε πολλῶν, εἴ τι πιστεῦσαι θεῶν
γρή θεσφάτοισιν, εἰς τὰ νῦν πεπραγμένα
βλέψαντα· συμβαίνει γὰρ οὐ τὰ μὲν, τὰ δ' οὐ
κεῖται τὰδ' ἔστι, κλήθος ἐκκριτὸν στρατοῦ
λείπει κεναῖσιν ἐλπίσιν πεπεισμένος
805 μένουσι δ' ἐνθα πεδίων Ἀσωπὸς ῥοαῖς
ἔρδει, φίλον πικρὰ Βοιωτῶν χθονί
οὐ σφεν κακῶν ὕψιστ' ἐπαμμένει παθεῖν,
ὕβρεως ἄπονα καθεὼν φρονημάτων

806 φῶλον ἰβικ· φύλος Μίγρι βικ ΣΦ

PERSIANS

ghost of darius

By starving to death a multitude that is too vastly numerous.

chorus

Well, we'll raise a picked, well-equipped expedition.

ghost of darius

No, not even the army that has now been left in the land of Greece
will gain a safe return home.

chorus

What do you mean? Hasn't the whole of the Eastern army crossed
back from Europe over the strait of Helle?

ghost of darius

Few out of many, if one is to place any credence in the oracles of the
gods, looking at what has now happened—for oracles are not fulfilled
by halves. If that is indeed so, Xerxes, seduced by vain hopes, has
left behind a large select portion of his army. They remain where the
Asopus waters the plain with its stream, bringing welcome
enrichment to the soul of the Boeotians. There the destiny awaits
them of suffering a crowning catastrophe in requital for their
outrageous actions and their godless arrogance.

117 lit. "for it is not the case that some things come to pass and others do
not." Darius' point is that the same oracle which had foretold the naval defeat at
Salamis also foretold a crushing defeat on land, soon after, at Plataea. The first
part of this oracle had now been fulfilled; therefore the second part would be, too.

118 The principal river of Boeotia, which separates Thebes from Plataea and
Mt Cithaeron to the south.

119 Aeschylus has simplified the course of events. Mardonius' army
actually wintered in Thessaly (Herodotus 8 113–135), and in the spring he
advanced on Athens, which was captured and later burnt for the second time
(Herodotus 9 1–3, 9 13.1); only when it was clear that Athens would not come to
terms, and that the Spartans were on the march, did he retreat into Boeotia and
prepare to meet the enemy there (Herodotus 9 12–15).

AESCHYLUS

PERSIANS

οἱ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη
 ἠδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πμπράναι νεῶν
 βωμοὶ δ' αἶστοι, δαιμόνων θ' ἰερύματα
 προρριζα φυρδὴν ἐξανίσταται βάθρων·
 τοιγὰρ κτεκὼς δράσαντες σὺκ' ἐλάσσονα
 πάσχουσιν, τὰ δὲ μέλλουσιν, κούδεσσιν κτεκὼν

5 κρηνὶς ὑπέστη, καλλ' ἔτ' ἐκπαύεται,
 τόσῳ, γὰρ ἔσται πέλ' ἀνὸς αἵματοςσφαγῆς
 πρὸς γῇ Πλαταιῶν Δωριδὸς λογιῆς ὑπὸ
 θῖνες νεκρῶν δὲ καὶ τριτοσπόρου γονῇ
 ἄφωνα σηματοῦσιν ὁμῶσιν βροτῶν
 8 ὥς οὐχ ὑπέρφευ θνητὸν ὄντα χρὴ φρονεῖν·
 ὑβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦσ' ἐκάρπωσε στάχυν
 ἄτης, ὅθεν πάγκλειτον ἔξμ' ἀθέρος,
 τοιαῦθ' ὁρῶντες τῶνδε τόπιτμα
 μέμνησθ' Ἀθηνῶν Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδὲ τις
 υπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα
 ἀλλων ἐρασθεὶς ὄλβον ἐκχέη μέγαν.
 Ζεὺς τοι κολαστὴς τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν
 φρονημάτων ἔτασται, εὐθύνος βαρυς
 πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐκείνων σωφρονεῖν κεχρημένοι
 πνύσκειτ' εὐλόγοισι νοθετημασιν
 λήξαι θεοβλαβοῦνθ' ὑπερκόμπω θρασει.
 σὺ δ', ὦ γεραῖά μοι, ἢ Ξερξέου φύλη,

511 θ' I k. acc. M b k. 815 κρηνὶς Housman, ὑπερὸν Σφ, καλλ' Lawson.
 κρηνὶς ὑπερὸν ἀλλ' codd.

815 ἐκπαύεται Schütz ἐκπαύεται αἰσ-β. τείσται codd.

When they came to the land of Greece, they did not scruple to
 plunder the images of the gods ⁴ and set fire to temples: altars have
 vanished, and the abodes of deities have been ruined, uprooted,
 wrenched from their foundations. Because of this evil they have
 done, they are suffering evil to match it in full measure, and have still
 to suffer more: the fountain of suffering has not stopped flowing—
 more of it is still gushing forth, so great will be the clotted libation of
 slain men's blood on the soil of the Plataeans shed by the Dorian
 spear. The heaps of corpses will voicelessly proclaim to the eyes of
 men, even to the third generation, that one who is a mortal should not
 think arrogant thoughts: outrage has blossomed, and has produced a
 crop of ruin, from which it is reaping a harvest of universal sorrow.
 Look on the price that is being paid for these actions, and remember
 Athens and Greece: let no one despise the fortune he possesses
 and through lust for more let his great prosperity go to waste. Zeus I
 tell you stands over all as a chastiser of pride that boasts itself to
 excess, calling it to stern account. With this in mind, please advise
 him to show good sense: warn him, with well-spoken admonitions, to
 stop offending the gods with his boastful rashness. And you, dear
 aged mother of Xerxes, go to your

120 The verb συλᾶν is broad enough in meaning to cover both carrying off
 the statues themselves (if they were of bronze or otherwise valuable) and stripping
 them of precious (and sacred) ornaments.

121 It is worth noting that the entire credit for the victory of Plataea is here
 given to the Spartans.

122 Cf. on 285.

ἐλθοῦς' ἐς οἴκους κόσμον, ὅστις εὐπρεπής,
λαβοῦσα ὑπαντιάζε παιδί· πάντα γάρ
κακῶν ὑπὲρ ἄλγους, λακίδες ἀμφὶ σωματι
στημορραγοῦσι ποικίλων ἐσθημάτων
ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ευφρόνας σὺ πρῶτον λόγους
μόνης γάρ, οἶδα, τοῦ κλύων ἀνέχεται
ἐγὼ δ' αλεῖμαι γῆ·, ὑπο' ὄφρα κάτω
54 ὑμεῖς δὲ, πρέσβεις, χαιρετ', ἐν κακοῖς ὄμοις
ψυχῇ διδόντες ἡδονὴν καθ' ἡμέραν
ὡς τοῖς θανούσι· πλοῦτος οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ πολλὰ καὶ παρόντα καὶ μέλλοντ' ἔτι
ἡλγησ' ἀκουσας βαρβάροισι πήματα.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

544 ὦ δαῖμον, ὅς με πόλλ' ἐσέρχεται κακὸς
ἀλγῆ· μάλιστα δ' ἦδε συμφορὰ δάκνει,
αἰμιαὶ γὰρ παῖδός, ἀμφὶ σωματι
ἐσθημάτων κλυοῦσιν, ἣ νῦν ἀμπέχει
ἀλλ' εἴμι, καὶ λαβοῦσα κόσμον ἐκ δόμων
550 ὑπαντιάζειν τέμῳ παιδίτ'· πειρώσομαι
οὐ γὰρ τὰ φύεται· ἐν κακοῖς προδωσομεν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

556 ὦ ποποι, ἦ μεγάλας ἀγαθὰς τε πο-
λισσονόμου βιοτᾶς ἐπεκυρσάμεν, εὖθ' ὁ γεραίος

8150 ἀμὲν παιδὶ M I b: παιδὶ ἀμὲν vel κατὰ b k: κατὰ μου Berges: ἀμὲν del West, suggesting e.g. παιδὶ <κατὰ λόγους νῦν πειρητοῦσθαι προσπαλῶν> πειρασομαι

palace, take such attire as is fitting, and go to meet your son. Because of his grief at the disaster, all the threads of his richly decorated garments are torn and in rags around his body. Calm him down with kindly words, I know that you are the only person he will be able to endure listening to. For myself, I am going away under the earth, down into the darkness. Farewell to you, old friends, and even amid these troubles, see you give your hearts pleasure day by day: wealth is of no benefit to the dead.

[The GHOST disappears.]

chorus

How it pains me to hear of these man's sufferings: present and still to come, of the people of the East!

queen

O god, how many dire sorrows are coming upon me! But the misfortune that stings me most of all is to hear of the dishonourable state of the garments that clothe my son's body. I am going now, and I will take proper attire from the palace and try to meet my son. We will not fail those who are dearest to us when they are in trouble.

[Exit.]

chorus

O popoi! What a great and good life we enjoyed in our well-run city, when our old

ÆSCHYLUS

- 855 πανταρχῆς ἀκάσας ἄμικτος βασιλεύς
 ισοθεὸς Δαρείος ἔρχε χώρας.
 856 φαίνομεθ' ἥδε ἴνομιματα πύργηνα πάντ' ἐπευθύνοντ'
 νόστοι δ' ἐκ πολέμων ἀπόνους ἀπαθεῖς
 <ἄνδρας> ἐς εὖ πρᾶσσοντας ἄγον οἴκους
 867 οὐδ' ἀφ' ἔστιας συθείς,
 870 οἶσι Στρυμονίου πελάγους Ἀχελαιῶδες εἰσὶ παρόνται
 Ὀρηνικῇ ἐπαυλῇ

- 858 εὐδοκίμους π: εὐδοκίμου M I b k.
 858-9 858-9 ἀπεφανόμε(σ)θα Isaac b ΣΦ ἀποφανόμε(σ)θα M I b k ΣΔ.
 859 νομιματα M b. νομιμα τὰ I b k νομιμα b k νομιματα b: νόμισμα τὰ k
 πολισματα Keizer, cf. ΣΔΙΦ ταῖς πόλεσι ταῖς πορθουμέναις
 860 πύργηνα πάντ' ἐπευθύνον (ἐπισθ- M b k): ΣΔΦ (above) empty e.g.
 πύργην· ἐπαυλῇ (Pallu: <οροπῇ>
 863 <ἄνδρας> add. Havet
 863 ἄς before εὖ Newman: before οἴκους codd
 866 ποταμοῖο Burney: ποταμοῦ vel iam. codd.

PERSIANS

- never-failing, + never-harming, invincible king,
 godlike Darius, ruled the country!
 In the first place, we produced armies of proved worth,
 and high-towered cities <we put totally to sack>,
 and, marching back from war, <our men> came
 unscathed,
 unfatigued, to flourishing homes
 And how many cities he took, without crossing the
 stream of the river Halys
 or starting from his hearth!
 Such were the freshwater + dwellings of the Thracians
 that neighbour the Strymonian gulf

- 123 It "all-sufficing", i.e. always satisfying the needs of any situation.
 124 The transmitted text is unmetrical, and, to the extent that it can be
 tortured into sense, seems to refer to the excellence and stability of Persian laws, a
 subject with no relevance to the surrounding context which relates exclusively to
 Persian success in war. Moreover, the scholia clearly reflect a text that made some
 reference to the sacking of cities (for this theme cf. 65, 105-8, 178, 348). I suspect
 therefore that some εἰς εὖ πρᾶσσοντας is a fragment of a marginal note, probably part of a
 quotation from another part, which has driven the original ending of this line out
 of the text.

- 125 It "and returns from wars brought <our men>".
 126 The river (now the Kizilirmak) divides northern Asia Minor into an
 eastern and a western half, and had formerly been the boundary between the
 Median and Lydian empires.
 127 It "Achelous" the name of the river Achelous (the largest in Greece,
 and sometimes spoken of as the father of all rivers—cf. Euripides, Bacchae 519),
 was used in poetry to mean "(fresh) water" (Iliad 625, Sophocles fr. 5,
 Aristophanes, Lysistrata 381).
 128 The reference is to the lake-villages of the Strymon basin (cf. Herodotus
 5.16), well known to Athenians in 472 because of Cimon's recent campaign on the
 lower Strymon, which included a large-scale clearance of the Thracians in the
 neighbourhood (Plutarch, Cimon 7.2).

AESCHYLUS

ἀνθ' ἑλμένας τ' ἐκτοθεν αἱ κατὰ χερσὸν ἐλγόμεναι περὶ
πύργον

875 τοῦδ' ἀνακτος αἶον,

Ἐλπίαν τ' ἀμφὶ πόρον πλατύν' ἐχέμεναι, μάχῃα τε
Προποντιανήν.

879 καὶ στομῶμα Πόντου·

σπ' ἡ νῆσοι θ' αἱ κατὰ πρῶν ἁλίων περιόχουσαι
τῶδε γὰρ προσήμεναι,

οἷα Λέσβου, οἷα εὐφροσύνης τε Σάμου,

Χίου, ἥδε Παρόν, Νάξου, Μυκόνος,

Τήναι τε συνάκτους Ἄνδρος ἀγγεγείσθαι.

καὶ τὰς ἀγγιᾶλους ἐκρατύνε μεσάκτιον.

891 Λήμνον Τικάρου θ' ἔδος,

καὶ Ρόδον ἥδε Κνίδον Κύπριος τε ποιεῖ,

Πάφον ἥδε Σόλους Σαλαμῖνα τε, ἴδ',

νῦν μητροπόλιν εἰνὸν αἰτία στενάχου.

871 σταυλας Wilamowitz σταυλας or σταυλας codd

876 τ' k oem M I h

877 ἐχέμεναι Broadhead συγκοιμῶναι M I h συγκοιμῶναι b k ΣΦ συγκοιμῶναι

I ἐχόμεναι b συγκοιμῶναι γὰρ συγκοιμῶναι Σ M h

897 στενάχων IIr στενάχων codd

PERSIANS

and, beyond the lake, the mainland cities, each

surrounded by a high wall,

obeyed this King,

as did those spread around the broad strait of Helles, and

the Propontis with its deep bays,

and the mouth of the Black Sea,

and the sea-girt islands which lay near this land

by the promontory that runs into the sea,

such as Lesbos, olive-growing Samos

and Chios and Paros, Naxos, Myconos,

and Andros, the near neighbour that adjoins Tenos,

and he also ruled the sea-lands midway between the two
shores,

Lemnos and the habitations of Icaros,

and Rhodes and Crudus and the cities of Cyprus,

Paphos and Soli and Salamis—

whose mother-city is the cause of our present

lamentation,

129 Near the Sea of Marmara, the most important Greek cities on its shores were Cyzicus on the Asian side and Perastinus on the European.

130 "This land" here means Asia as a whole.

131 The Ionian peninsula, which has Chios to its west, Lesbos to its north and Samos to its south. The five other islands mentioned in this stanza are not covered by the description, being in the Cyclades group in the south-western Aegean.

132 Of Europe and Asia, this description applies only to the first two islands mentioned, Lemnos in the northern Aegean and Icaros in the southern.

133 Salamis in Cyprus was traditionally founded by Teucer, Ajax's half-brother, when he was banished from the other Salamis by his father after returning from the Trojan War without Ajax. Aeschylus may have presented a version of this story in *The Women of Salamis*.

AESCHYLUS

ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ εὐκτεάνου' κατα κλῆρον Ἴωνιον
 πολυάνδρους
 εἰ λαναν ἐκράτυε <πόλει> σφετεραι φρεσιν
 ἀκάματος θε παρὴν σθενος ἀνδρῶν τευχιστηρῶν
 παμμάκτων τ' ἐπικτόρων
 905 νῦν δ' οὐκ ἀμφιλόνης θεότρεπτα τὰδ' αὖ φέρομεν
 πόλεμοισι,
 δμαθέντες μεγάλης πλάγαϊσι ποντισιασιν

FEPHVS

ὦ ὦ
 δυστήνος ἐγώ, στυγερά μοῖρα;
 910 τῆσδε κυρήσας ἀταρμαρτοσύνης
 ὥς ὠμοφρόνας δαίμων ἐνέβη
 Περσῶν γενεᾷ· τί πάθω τέλημων;
 λελυται γὰρ ἔμοι γυναικῶν ρωμη
 τῆνδ' ἡλικίαν ἐσιῶσι αἰσῶν
 915 εἶδ' ὄφελε, Ζεῦ, καμῆ μετ' ἀνδρῶν
 τῶν οἰχομένων
 θανάτου κατα μοῖρα καὶ νῦν

XOPOV

οτοτοῖ, βασιλεῦ, στρατιᾶς ἀγαθῆς.

- 899 Ἴωνιον Hermann. Ἴωνιον codd.
 900 ἐκράτυε <πόλει> Schütz. ἐκράτυε(v) codd.
 908 ὦ ὦ z. cf. 974, 1004–5, 1069, 1073 ὦ codd.
 913 ἔμοι Schütz. ἔμῶν codd.

PERSIANS

and the wealthy, populous <cities> of the Greeks
 in the Ionian domain he ruled by his wisdom.
 He had available to him the tireless strength of men-at-arms
 and of a mixed multitude of allies
 But now we are experiencing the decisive reversal of all
 this by the gods in war,
 mightily smitten by blows struck at sea

[Enter XERXES from the west. He is alone on foot, his royal robes
 in tags, and carrying nothing but an empty quiver.]

xerxes

ὦ, ὦ!
 Hapless that I am, to have met
 this dreadful fate, so utterly unpredictable!
 How cruelly the god has trodden
 on the Persian race! What am I to do, wretched me?
 The strength is drained out of my limbs
 when I see these aged citizens.
 Would to Zeus that the fate of death
 had covered me over too
 together with the men who are departed!

chorus

Ototoi, my King, for that fine army,

134 The reference to his tented wagon (1000–1) does not imply that he has
 returned in it; see Taplin, *Stagecraft* 123.

135 Because (i) there are virtually no young men left, (ii) he has been
 responsible for the death of so many, and (iii) some of the victims must be sons of
 the old men he faces.

AESCHYLUS

και περσονομου τιμῇ, μὲν' αὖ η.

930 κόσμῳ τ' ἀνδρῶν,
οὐ. νῦν ὀπίμων επεκείρεν

προφ γὰρ δ' αἰάζει τὸν ἐγγαίαν
ἦβαν ἑρξά κταμέναν, Ἄδου
σάκτορι Περσῶν ἀνδραβάται νάρ
πολλοὶ φῶτες, χωρὰς ἀνθος,
τοξοδράμαντες, πᾶν τάρσιν τι
μυρία, ἀνδρῶν, ἐξεφθάνται
αἰαὶ αἰαὶ κενῶν αὖ καὶ
Ἄσια δὲ γῆαν, βασιλεῦ ἰαίας,
ἀνδρῶς ἀνδρῶς ἐπὶ ἰόντι κέκλιται

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

πρ ε οὐδ' ἐνὼν οἷοί' αἰακτός·
μέλεος γέννα νῶ τε τὰ τετρα
κακοὶ ἀρ' ἐ/ενομα

ΧΟΡΟΣ

935 προσφθονγοὶ σοὶ ἔνοστον τὰ·
κακοφάτωσ' ἔσσι κακωμελέων κα
Μαριανδυνῶν θρηνητήρος
940 πεμψῶ πεμψῶ πολυόσπερον

926 τάρσιν, τε, Franz γὰρ φούτε, φούτε, b¹ codd

928 αἰαὶ αἰαὶ αὖ αὖ αὖ αὖ, b αὖ αὖ αὖ αὖ αὖ αὖ M I b k

932 πατοσα, αὖ, snp, b ΣΦ πατοσα M I b k

935 προσφθονγοὶ k cf ΣΜ προσφθονγοὶ προσφθονγοὶ, corrected from

αὖ, b προσφθονγοὶ αὖ προσφθονγοὶ M I b k ΣΦ

940 πολυόσπερον Snell: πολυόσπερον ιαγαν codd

PERSIANS

and for the great honour of Persian empire
and the men who adorned it,
whom now the god has scythed away!

[They shift from chant to song]
The land laments its native youth
killed by Xerxes, who crammed Hades
with Persians, many men
who were marched away, ¹³⁶ the flower of the land,
slayers with the bow, thronging
myriads of men, have perished and gone
Aia, aia, for our brave defenders!
King of our country, the land of Asia
is terribly, terribly down on her knees

xerxes

Here am I—οἷος!—one to grieve for
wretch that I am, I see I have been a bane
to my nation and my fatherland

chorus

In response to your return
I shall send forth, send forth with many tears
the shout of woeful words, the cry of woeful thoughts
of a Mariandynian dirge-singer.

¹³⁶ With W. Kraus *Wiener Studien* 104 (199), 101 n 50 I take ἀνδραβάται
to mean *infans*. Lucian *Lexiphanes* 16 βανοντες, marching as if led away by
force

¹³⁷ The Mariandyni were a people of north-western Asia Minor, in the
hinterland of the Greek colony of Heraclea Pontica, whose ritual laments were
famous.

AESCHYLUS

ΕΡΩΗΣ

ἀντ α ἴετ' εἰανῇ κῆνδύργον
 δυσθροσὺν αὐδᾶν δαίμων γὰρ ὅδ' αὖ
 μετὰτροπος ἐπ' ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦσθε τοὶ καὶ πᾶντι, ἴλασκαθῇ
 5 τε σεβύροντ' ἀλίτιν' αἰετὶ βάρη
 πόλεως, γέννας πενθητήρος
 κλάγξω δὴ γοὸν ἀριδακρυῶν

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

πρ β Ἰάων γὰρ ἀπηύρα,
 Ἰάων νηυφαρκτός Ἀρης ἐτεράλειχς
 νηχίαν πλάκα κερσαμένος δυσδαίμων αἰετὶ αἰκτῶν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰοιοῖ βόα καὶ πᾶντ' εἰσπενθῶν
 ποῦ δὲ φίλων ἄλλος ὄχλος,
 ποῦ δὲ σοὶ παραστάται,
 οἶος ἦν Φαρανδάκης,
 Σουσας, Πελάγων καὶ Δατάμας
 960 ἦδ' Ψάμμις Σουσισκάνης τ'
 Ἀγβατανα λυγρῶν,

941 κῆνδύργον Passow and C. Schneider: καὶ κῆνδύργον codd. 944 πᾶντι
 West: πανοδύργον codd.

944 -5 ἴλασκαθῇ τε (τε om. I b) σεβύρων codd. λαοὺ τε καὶ θεῶν τε σεβῶν
 Eioanfield: λαοὺ καὶ θεῶν σεβύρων West: περὶ λαοὺ καὶ θεῶν τε σεβῶν. 945 ὅτι
 Sommerstein: ὅτ' αὖ codd.

950 -1 Ἰάων M(951): Ἰανῶν (or Ἰαονῶν or Ἰανῶν) M(950), Ms(951), I b
 k

959 Δατάμας Passow: Δαταμάς vel αἰν. codd.

960 ἦδ' Passow: ἦδ' Ἀγβαταῖς (Agba-b') codd.

PERSIANS

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

Utter words of grief and sorrow,
 full of lamentation, for this divinity
 has turned right round against me.

chorus

I shall do so indeed, I tell you,
 honouring the sufferings of the army and the grievous
 blows struck at sea
 to the city and the nation: truly I shall cry forth
 the tearful wail of a mourner.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

It was the Ionian, the Ionian war-spirit,
 giving victory to their embattled ships, that robbed us of
 our men,
 cutting a swathe across the night-dark expanse of the sea
 and the ill-starred shore.

chorus

Cry "οἰοιοῖ!" and learn it all
 Where are the rest, your multitude of friends?
 Where are those who stood beside you,
 men such as Pharan-daces was,
 Susas, Pelagon and Datamas,
 and Psammis and Susascanes
 who went from Agbatana?

138 The text of these lines is badly corrupt, and though the general sense is
 clear, the above translation must be regarded as somewhat tentative so far as detail
 is concerned.

AESCHYLUS

ΕΡΓΗΣ

ἀνδρῶν ὅλοισις ἀπελείπειν
 Τυρίας ἐκ ναὸς ἔρποντας ἐπ' ἀκταῖς
 965 Σαλαμινιάσι, στυφελὺν θεκνοντάς ἐκ ἄκρας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰοιοῖ τ' ποῦ δέτ' οἱ Φαρνοῦχος
 κάριομαρδὸς γ' ἀγαθός,
 ποῦ δὲ Σευάλοισις ἀναΐ
 970 ἢ Αἰλαῖος ευπάτωρ,
 Μέμφις, Θάρυβις καὶ Μασιστράς
 Ἀρτεμβάρης τ' ἢ δὲ Ὑσταεχμάς,
 τὰδε σ' ἐπανερομαν

ΠΕΡΣΙΑΝ

σὺ γὰρ ἰὼ, ἰὼ μοι
 974 τὰς ὀφρυγίους κατιδόντας
 στυγνὰς Αἰθνας πάντας ἐνὶ πιτύλῳ,
 ἔἔ, ἔἔ, ἐλάμονες ἀσπαιροῦσι χέρσῳ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ καὶ Περσὶν τὸν αἰσίων
 τὸν σὸν πιστὸν παῖτ' ὀφθαλμοῖν

965 Σαλαμινιάσι Hermann: Σαλαμινίσι vel sim. codd.

966 ἄκρας Pautw: ἀκτὰς codd.

967 ποῦ δὲ M l b k: ποῦ δὲ κ: βοῶ: ποῦ Hermann: ποῦ δὲ ποῦ Page 968 γ

Pautw: τ' codd.

973 ἐπανερομαν Wellauer (after Meineke): ἐπανερομῶν vel sim. codd.

974 μοι tr: μοι μοι M l b k.

977 ε four times k: twice l: thence M b k.

978 Περσῶν τὸν ἄσπετον Page: τὸν (τὸν M lac b') Περσῶν αἰσίων codd.

PERSIANS

XERXES

I left them dead
 fallen out of a Tyrian ship off the shores
 of Salamis, striking against a rugged cape

chorus

Cry "οἰοιοι!" Where did you leave Pharnuchus,
 yes, and the brave Aniomardus?
 Where is the lord Seualices
 or the nobly-born Laisena,
 Memptus, Tharybis and Masistras,
 Artembares and Hystaechmas?
 I ask you this again!

ΠΕΡΣΙΑΝ

Io, io, ah me!
 After setting eyes on ancient Athens,
 hateful Athens, all of them in one stroke—
 [repeated sobs] gasp their life out wretchedly on the
 shore!

chorus

And what of that flower of Persia,
 your ever-faithful Eye,

139 A syllable or two has been lost from the text, but no restoration is entirely convincing. I have translated Hermann's.

140 Greeks believed that one of the high officials in the Persian administration was called "the King's Eye." Cf. Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 91-125; Herodotus 1.114.2. There is no evidence in Persian sources of the existence of such an official.

AESCHYLUS

480 μυρία μυρία πεπταστῶν
 < > Βατανόχου
 παῖδ' Ἀλπίτον
 τοῦ Σεσάμα τοῦ Μεγαβάτα,
 Πάρθον τε μέγαν τε Οἰβάρην
 485 ἔλπετε ἔλπετε... ὦ ὦ δαίμων
 Πέρσαι, αἰγυιοὶ κακὰ προκάκα χεῖρες

ΠΕΡΣΗΣ

487 ἔγχε μοι δῆτ'
 ἀναβέη ἔταρον ἀνακνεῖ·
 491 αἶσα αἶσα στυγερὰ προκάκα χεῖρας
 βοᾷ βοᾷ μοι μέλεος ἐνδοθεῖ ἥτορ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μή αἶσιν γε ποθοῦμεν
 Μαρδὸν ἀνδρῶν μυριοτάτων
 Ξανθὸν Ἀρίων τε Ἀγχάρην
 904 Διαξὸν τε ἠδ' Ἀρσάκην
 ὑπὸ πτεράκται,
 ἑκτροαδάται[†] καὶ Λυθιμνάς

981 lacuna posited here by West after Ἀλπίστον (sic) by Hermann. 984 τ' Οἰβάρην z. τ' Οἰβάρην τ' (τυβαναρ b) M I b k. 989 ἀνακνεῖ; Headlam ὑπομνηστικῆς (a gloss) codd. 990 ἔλπετε ἔλπετε Hermann ἔλπετε codd. 991 μοι Dindorf[†] om. codd. 992 ἔλπετε Pruss. ἄλλε (ἄλλον ἵπε) codd. 993 μυριοτάτων (μυριοτατῶν) Dindorf[†] μυριοταρχὸν vel sum. Mac b k(?) μυριάνταρχον I b k.

997 ἐκτροαδάται M b k. ἐκτροαδάται I b. ἐκτροαδάται b. καὶ Δαδάται West

PERSIANS

who counted the numberless tens of thousands,¹
 < > the favourite son
 of Batanochus,
 the son of Sesames, the son of Megabates,
 and great Parthus and Oebares—
 did you leave them, did you leave them? Oh, oh, hapless
 ones!
 You speak of evils beyond evils for noble Persians

XERXES

You do stir up in me
 a longing for my brave comrades,
 speaking of unforgettable, unforgettable things, hateful
 beyond hatefulness
 My heart cries out, cries out, within my body!

CHORUS

And there are others too that we miss,
 Xanthos the commander of ten thousand Mardians²
 and Anchares of the Arians,
 and Daixus and Artaces,
 lords of the cavalry,
 and Egadates³ and Lythumnas

141 Possibly alluding to the story (Herodotus 7.60) of the Persian army being counted, ten thousand at a time, at Doriscus in Thrace.

142 The man's name is lost.

143 The Marsh were a nomadic Persian tribe (Herodotus 1.125.4).

144 Another Iranian people (Herodotus 7.56.1).

145 This is the name to which the manuscript tradition seems to point, but many have found it implausible when compared both with real Persian names and with those used elsewhere in the play.

AESCHYLUS

Τολμῶν τ' ἀγμῶν ἀκόρεστον
ἔταφον ἔταφον οὐκ ἀμφι σκηναῖς
τροχληατοῖσιν ὀπιθεὶς ἐπομένον.

ΕΡΧΕΤΕ

στρ δ βεβῶσαι γὰρ τοῦτερ ἀγρεται στρατοῦ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βεβῶσαι, οἱ νένημοι

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἦ ἦ ἦ ἦ ἦ ἦ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1005 ἰὼ ἰὼ δαίμονες,
*εθετ *αελατοῖς κακοῖς
διαπρέπον οἷον δεδορκεν Ἄτα

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἀν δ πεπλήγημεθ' τοῖα δι' αἰῶνος τυχαῖ.

998 τ κ om cett

1001. οπιθεὶς Bothe. ἐπομένους Hartung οπιθεὶς δ / δ οτ οτ ο οτ δ b
ἐπομένους codd

1002. εἰς τερ Passov. ἀγρεται Teup εἰς τερ ἀγρεται εκδοῦνς γρ L D codd

1006 εθετ εθενι b εθετ b codd εθετ G C W Schneider ες εθετ
Frux Johansen

1008 so M οἷα τυχαῖ b οἷα τυχαῖ I b δ δαίμονες γρ M γρ I οἱ τὰ,
δι αἰῶνος τυχαῖ West

PERSIANS

and Tolmua, never surferted with battle.
I am amazed, amazed, that they are not following
behind your wheeled tent

xerxes

Yes, those who were marshals of my army have gone

chorus

They have gone—oi!—without a name

xerxes

Ieh. seh' lo so'

chorus

Io, so, you gods,
you have caused suffering that no one expected
for all to behold. What an evil eve Ruin has cast upon
us!

xerxes

Oi, we have been struck down from our age-old good
fortune—

146 i.e. a carriage with curtains (the normal Greek word was ἀρμασπῆς), to
Greeks an emblem of Persian luxury (cf. Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 11). On his
westward march to Greece, Xerxes travelled sometimes in a chariot, sometimes in
a ἀρμασπῆς, with a thousand of the noblest and bravest Persians following him,
together with other picked troops (Herodotus 4.1.2). The Persian elders had
expected that he would return in similar style, with his carriage and his escort: he
has come back with neither.

147 I translate West's conjecture (Studies 94-95), which involves a syntactic
construction not exactly parallelised but gives excellent sense, especially in
contrasting the Persians' "age-old good fortune" with their "new" (1010) and
unanticipated (1006) disaster.

ÆSCHYLUS

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πεπλήγμεθ' εὔδηλα γάρ—

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1010 νῆα νῆα δυα δυα

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἴωνων ναυβατῶν
κύρσαντες οὐκ εὐτυχῶς,
δυσπόλεμον δὴ γένος το Περσῶν

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

σφ 1 πῶς δ' οὐ, στρατὸν μὲν τοσοῦ-
1015 τον τάλας πεπληγμέναι

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τι δ' οὐκ ὄλωλεν, μεγάλατε Περσῶν;

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ὄρῃς τὸ λοιπὸν τόδε τῆς ἐμᾶς στολᾶς;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄρῳ ὄρῳ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1020 τάνδε τ' οἰστοδεγμονα—

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί τόδε λεγεις σεοσιμενον;

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

θησαυρον βαλκεσση

1020 τόνος Porson. τινός τεί ανα. codd.

PERSIANS

chorus

We have been struck down, that is all too plain—

XERXES

—by new agony, new agony!

chorus

—by an ill-starred encounter
with Ionian sailors.
The Persian race is luckless in war

XERXES

Indeed it is. I am stricken to misery
in the loss of this great army

chorus

You who have brought such great ruin to Persia—what is
not lost?

XERXES

Do you see these remnants of my attire?

chorus

I do. I do!

XERXES

[displaying his quiver]
And this arrow-holding—

chorus

What is this that you say was saved?

XERXES

repository for missiles?

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βανά γ' ἄς ἀπὸ πολλῶν

ἙΡΜΗΣ

εὐπανισμεθ' ἀργῶν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1015 Ἴωνον λαὸς οὐ φηγαίμας

ἙΡΜΗΣ

1016 ἄγαν ἄρειος κατεῖ-
δον δὲ πῆμ' ἄελπιον

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τραπὲν τα ναυφαρκτον ἔρεις οἰκόν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1017 πέπλον δ' ἐπέρρηξ' ἐπὶ συμφορᾷ κακοῦ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παπαι παπαι

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

καὶ πλέον ἢ παπαῖ μὲν οὖν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

διῶμα γὰρ ἔστι καὶ τριπλά

ἙΡΜΗΣ

λυπρὰ χάρματα δ' ἐχθροῖς

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1018 καὶ σθένος γ' ἐκαλούθη—

1026 ἄγαν ἄρειος Wellhausen ἀγανορ(ε)ιος codd.

chorus

I stile indeed, out of so much

xerxes

Our defenders have been decimated.

chorus

The Ionian people are not cowardly in battle 1015

xerxes

They are all too martial! I have witnessed
a disaster I never expected.

chorus

You mean the rout of our mass of ships?

chorus

I ripped my robe at the terrible event.

chorus

Papai, papai!

xerxes

No, "papai" is too mild!

chorus

Yes, the disaster was twice and thrice as great

xerxes

Painful, and a delight to our enemies!

chorus

Cot short, too, was the strength—

148 lit. "do not flee the spear-point"

149 lit. "on the contrary, even more than 'papai'!"

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

γυμνός εἰμι προπομπῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

—φύλον ἄπεισι κοντίζουσιν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1031 σφ. ζ. δάιντε δάιντε πῆμα· πρὸς δόμον, δ' ἴθι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1047 διαίνομαι γοεδνός ὦν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1040 βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δόσιν κακῶν κακῶν κακοῖς.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἴσζε μέλος ὁμοῦ τιθεῖς.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ καὶ ΧΟΡΟΣ

ότοτοτοτοῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βαρεῖά γ' ἔδε συμφορά·

1045 οἶ, μάλα καὶ τοδ' ἀλγῶν.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1046 ὠτ. ζ. ἔρεσσ' ἔρεσσε καὶ στέναζε' ἐμὴν χάριν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1039 αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, δῦα δῦα.

1039 and 1047 interchanged by Butler
1039 see above on 1039/41.

XERXES

I am denuded of escorts!

chorus

—of our friends, by calamities at sea.

XERXES

Wet, wet your cheeks in grief, and go with me to the palace.

chorus

I wet my cheeks in mourning.

XERXES

Cry out now in response to my cries.

chorus

A sad answer of sad sound to sad sound.

XERXES

Raise a song of woe, joining it together with mine.

XERXES

and CHORUS

Ototototoi!

chorus

How grievous is this disaster!

Oi, it truly does give me pain!

[Through the next three stanzas the CHORUS successively perform the actions that XERXES prescribes.]

XERXES

Row, row with your arms, and groan for my sake.

chorus

Aiai, aiai! Sorrow, sorrow!

1048 βόα νυν ἀνταδουπά μοι.
 ΞΕΡΞΗΣ
 ΧΟΡΟΣ
 μέλεν πάρεστι, δέσποτα.
 ΞΕΡΞΗΣ
 1050 ἐπορθιάζῃ νυν γόοις
 ΞΕΡΞΗΣ καὶ ΧΟΡΟΣ
 ὀτοτοτοτοῖ.
 ΧΟΡΟΣ
 μέλανα δ' ἄμμεμνείζεται,
 οἷ, στονόεσσα πλάγᾳ.
 ΞΕΡΞΗΣ
 1051 καὶ στέρν' ἄρασσε κάπιβόα τὸ Μύσιον.
 ΧΟΡΟΣ
 1055 ἔνια ἔνια.
 ΞΕΡΞΗΣ
 καὶ μοι γενείου πέρθε λευκήρη τρίχα.
 ΧΟΡΟΣ
 ἔπρηδ' ἔπρηδα, μάλα γοεῶνά.
 ΞΕΡΞΗΣ
 πῶται δ' ὄξύ.
 ΧΟΡΟΣ
 καὶ τάδ' ἔρξα.
 1052 ἄμμα- Mac(?) Dindorf: πῶ μα- Mpc I b k.
 1053 οἷ Lachmann: μοι codd.
 1056 πέρθε k x: ὑπερθε(v) MI b k.

Xerxes
 Cry out now in response to my cries.
 chorus
 I can take care to do that, master.
 Xerxes
 Now raise a high-pitched wail.
 Xerxes
 and CHORUS
 Ototototoi!
 chorus
 And mixed in with my groans will be—
 oi!—black, violent blows.¹⁵⁰
 Xerxes
 Beat your breasts too, and accompany the action with a
 Mysian cry.
 chorus
 Painful, painful!
 Xerxes
 Now, please, ravage the white hairs of your beard.
 chorus
 With clenched hands, with clenched hands, very
 mournfully!
 Xerxes
 And raise a piercing shriek.
 chorus
 I shall do that too.

150 Presumably to the head (cf. Cho. 427–8), since Xerxes' next line shows that breast-beating has not yet been mentioned. The blows are "black" because they will be delivered hard enough to raise bruises.

AESCHYLUS

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἀντ' ἡ πέπλον δ' ἔρυσσε καλύπτειν ἀκροῇ χερσὶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1061 ἄνια ἄνια.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

καὶ ψάλλ', ἔθειραν καὶ κατουκτίσαι στρατόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄπριγδ' ἄπριγδα, μάλα γοεδνά.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

διαίνου δ' ὅσσε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1065 τέλλομαί τοι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1066 βόα νυν ἀντίδουπά μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἶοι οἶοι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

αἰακτὸς εἰς δόμους κίε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

1070 ἰὼα δὴ κατ' ἅστυ—

PERSIANS

xerxes

Tear the folds of your robe with your hands.

chorus

Painful, painful!

xerxes

And pluck your hair, and voice your pity for the army.

chorus

With clenched hands, with clenched hands, very
mournfully!

xerxes

And make your eyes moist.

chorus

I assure you I am moistening them.

[A mournful procession now sets itself slowly in motion, as the
CHORUS escort XERXES away towards his palace.]

xerxes

Cry out now in response to my cries.

chorus

Oioi, oioi!

xerxes

Go wailing to the palace.

chorus

Io, io!

xerxes

Let "io" indeed be heard throughout the city—

AESCHYLUS

ΕΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼα δῆτα, ναι ναι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

γοᾶσθ' ἀβροβάται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ, Περσίς αἶα δυσβατός.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

<|>

ΧΟΡΟΣ

<|>

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

ἦῆ ἦῆ, τρισκαλμοισιν—

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦῆ ἦῆ, βάρισιν ὀλόμενοι.

ΞΕΡΞΗΣ

<|>

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πέμπω τοί σε δυσθρόοις γόοις.

1073 –4 lacuna posited by West.

1075 –6 lacuna posited by West, who suggests e.g. «στρόται νῦν μ' ἔς οἶκον».

PERSIANS

chorus

Let “iō” be heard indeed, yes, yes!

xerxes

—as you lament, while you walk delicately.

chorus

Iō, iō, Persian ground is hard to tread on!¹⁵³

xerxes

<|>¹⁵²

chorus

<|>.

xerxes

Ehhh-ehhh, ehbb-ehbb—the triple-oared—

chorus

Ehhh-ehhh, ehbb-ehbb—boats destroyed them!

xerxes

<Escort me now to my palace.>¹⁵¹

chorus

Yes, I will escort you, with loud wails of grief.

[Exeunt.]

151 Persia was thought of by Greeks as a land of rugged terrain (Herodotus 9.122; Aristophanes, Birds 833–6; Xenophon, Cyropaedia 1.3.3, 7.5.67); but why should the elders feel this specially now? Are they perhaps walking barefoot, having cast off their shoes as a further gesture of mourning?

152 West (Studies 96) argues convincingly that two lines have been lost here, each probably beginning with yet another cry of woe; without the lacuna, the change of topic is extremely abrupt, and ὀλόμενοι has no construction.

153 I translate West's conjecture; the chorus's final line (with its voc as in 1065) clearly presupposes that they are obeying an order.